LED ZEPPELIN

ALL THE SONGS

THE STORY BEHIND EVERY TRACK

JEAN-MICHEL GUESDON & PHILIPPE MARGOTIN

U.S. $50.00/CAN. $65.00

"Led Zeppelin—talented, complex, grasping, beautiful, and dangerous—made one of the most enduring bodies of composition and performance in twentieth-century music, despite everything they had to overpower, including themselves."

—MIKAL GILMORE, *ROLLING STONE*

Go inside the studio with *Led Zeppelin All the Songs* to witness the recording of every song of the record-breaking, legacy-making band that for many defined rock and roll in the '70s. From that fateful day in July 1968 when Jimmy Page first heard Robert Plant fronting the band Obstweedle through the band's meteoric rise, *Led Zeppelin All the Songs* illuminates the lyrics, the inspirations, the instruments selected, the album titles and iconic art, and the behind-the-scenes dramas and collaborations that created a legacy that influences musicians and performers to this day. Authors Guesdon and Margotin pack this book with anecdotes that bring to life startling figures of importance, such as engineer Andy Johns, who helped create the iconic drum sound on "When the Levee Breaks" by recording John Bonham at the bottom of a stairwell.

Organized chronologically by album, *Led Zeppelin All the Songs* profiles each platinum-selling disk, from the debut *Led Zeppelin* in 1969 (recorded in just 30 hours) to 1975's double-album *Physical Graffiti* (the first on their own Swan Song label) to their 1982 release of *Coda* after the untimely death of John Bonham. Packed with iconic and some rarely seen photos throughout, this is the must-have book for every fan of great rock music for all time.

LED ZEPPELIN
ALL THE SONGS

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Jean-Michel Guesdon and Philippe Margotin

LED ZEPPELIN
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THE STORY BEHIND EVERY TRACK

BLACK DOG
& LEVENTHAL
PUBLISHERS

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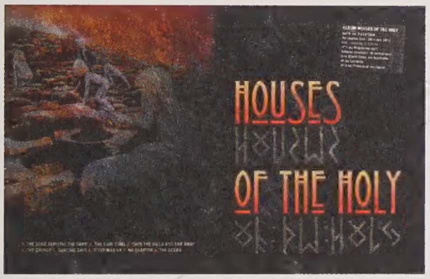
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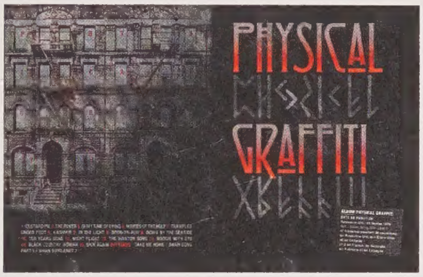
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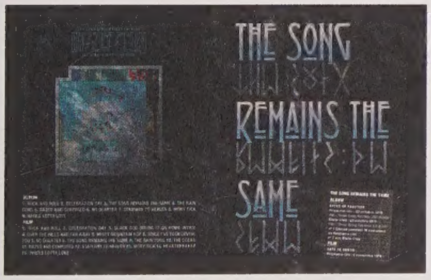
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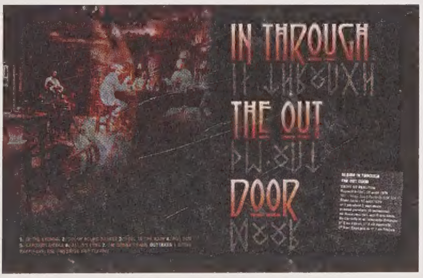
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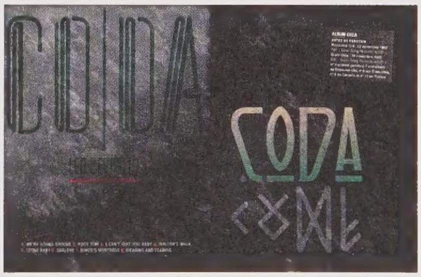

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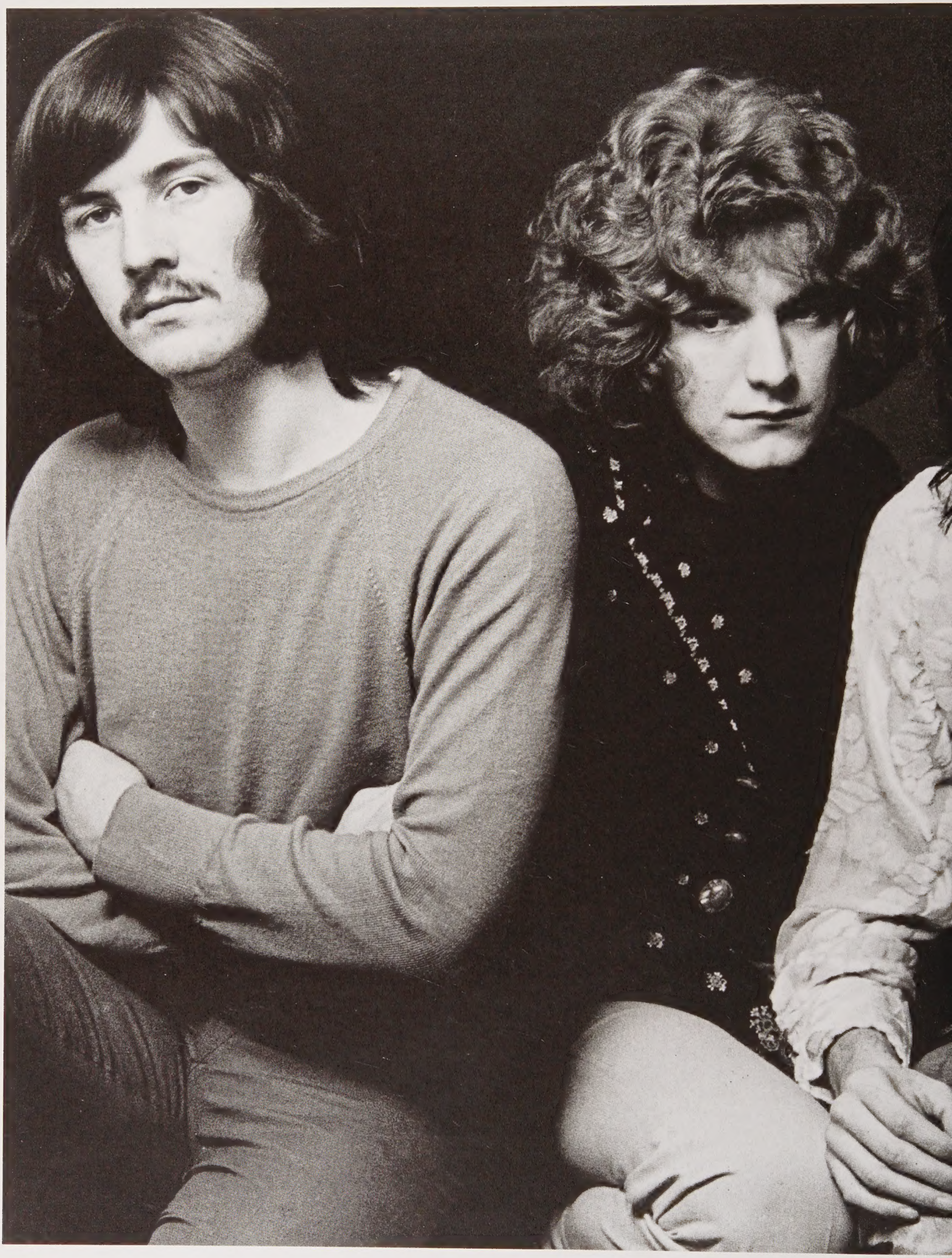


Left: Left to right, John Bonham, Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, and John Paul Jones embarking on one of the most exciting adventures in the history of rock 'n' roll: Led Zeppelin.

Following spread: Jimmy Page at Olympic Studios, London, in April 1969 during the recording of the band's second album.

THE AIRSHIP TAKES FLIGHT

Led Zeppelin rose from the burning embers of the Yardbirds in autumn 1968. At the end of March, Keith Relf (vocals, guitar), Jimmy Page (guitar), Chris Dreja (bass), and Jim McCarty (drums) embarked on a seventh US tour: twenty-five concerts from March 28 (Schenectady, New York) to June 5 (Montgomery, Alabama). As various members of the group were already developing other projects, this was to be the last. "It was in Los Angeles that the Yardbirds—Jim and Keith—decided to call it a day and pursue a new musical direction," remembers Jimmy Page, before adding, curiously, "The day before their announcement I visited a palmist who told me that I was soon to make a decision that would change my life."[1]

From the Yardbirds to Led Zeppelin

In 1968, while the baby boomers were dreaming of free love, of changing the world and ditching the rulebook, the music scene was also undergoing a revolution. The previous year had seen rock music radically transformed by the Beatles with their concept album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, by Pink Floyd with *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*, by the Doors with their eponymous first album, by Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention with *Absolutely Free*, by the Jimi Hendrix Experience with *Are You Experienced* and *Axis: Bold as Love*, and by Cream with *Disraeli Gears*. A year later, following the emergence of the first two power trios of the rock era—the Jimi Hendrix Experience and Cream—two more groups started to draw attention to themselves by pumping up the decibels: Iron Butterfly, with the title track and album *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* (which sold some eight million copies in 1968 alone!) and Vanilla Fudge, whose eponymous debut album (1967) included impassioned covers of "Ticket to Ride" and "Eleanor Rigby" (by Lennon/McCartney), "People Get Ready" (by Curtis Mayfield), and "You Keep Me Hangin' On" (by the Motown trio Holland-Dozier-Holland). It was not long since Jeff Beck had also broken free. Jimmy Page's former Yardbirds colleague had formed the Jeff Beck Group with Rod Stewart (lead vocals), Ron Wood (bass), and Micky Waller (drums), recording the superb album *Truth* (between May 1966 and May 1968, released in August 1968) which includes "Beck's Bolero," written mainly by…Jimmy Page.

This hard or heavy rock, often tinged with psychedelia, is the very route Jimmy Page was determined to go down. The departure of Keith Relf and Jim McCarty from the Yardbirds provided Page with an unexpected opportunity to do just that. For the moment, Page and Dreja obtained the right to carry on the adventure under the Yardbirds name, but felt duty bound to honor the band's existing commitments. At the same time, the guitarist started drawing up a list of musicians with whom he wanted to play. He hoped to convince the drummer B. J. Wilson—with whom he had contributed to Joe Cocker's cover of "With a Little Help from My Friends" (released as a single in October 1968)—to join him in the new venture, but Wilson was now a member of Procol Harum, a band that had been at the forefront of symphonic rock since "A Whiter Shade of Pale" and was going from strength to strength. Page therefore received a polite refusal from the drummer…

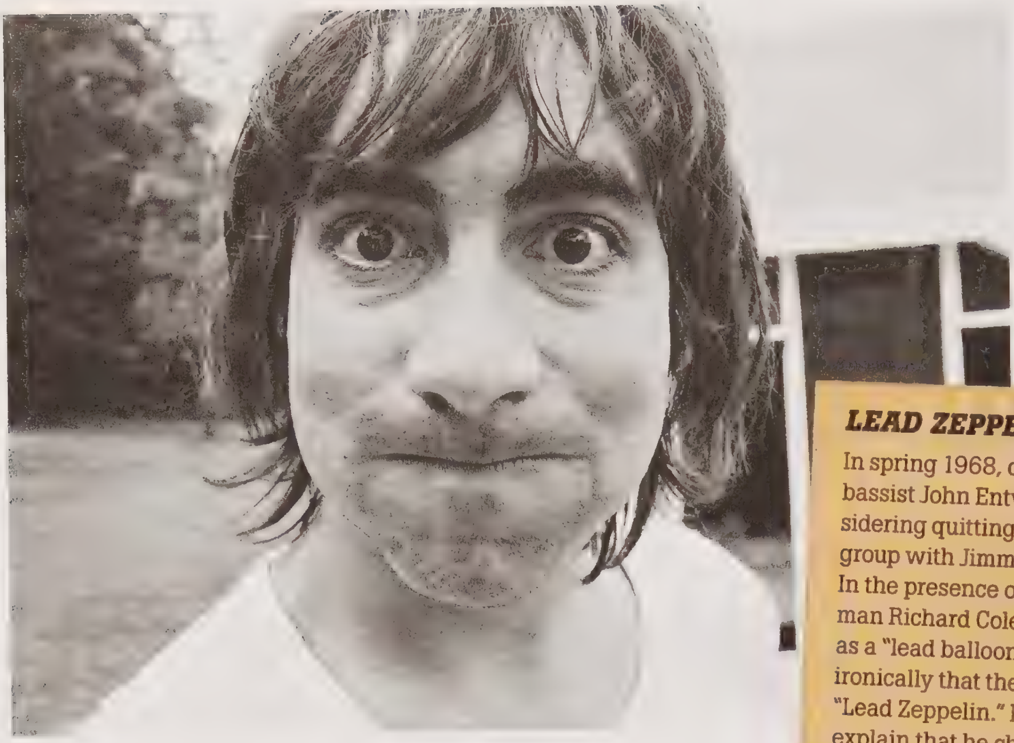
BOUTON ROUGE
6547

The Yardbirds (left to right: Keith Relf, Jimmy Page, Jim McCarty, and Chris Dreja) performing for the French television show *Bouton Rouge,* March 9, 1968.

As for the lead singer, Page initially thought of Steve Marriott, whose work as front man of the Small Faces he rated highly, and then Terry Reid, of whom he had great memories from September 1966, when Peter Jay and the New Jaywalkers, of which Reid was a member, supported the Rolling Stones on tour alongside the Yardbirds. However, Terry Reid had to turn down the offer for contractual reasons, having signed with Mickie Most as a solo artist and begun recording his first album (*Bang, Bang You're Terry Reid*). Reid suggested that Jimmy Page contact another singer he admired, one Robert Plant, then a member of a Birmingham-based band by the name of Obbstweedle. On July 20, 1968, Page, Dreja, and Peter Grant (manager of the Yardbirds and future manager of Led Zeppelin) traveled to Walsall College (in the West Midlands) to see the band in concert and were won over. A few days later, Jimmy Page invited Robert Plant to his riverside home in Pangbourne (Berkshire) on the Thames, and told him of his plans to form a new group. "I was taken aback," explains Plant to Paul Rees. "I mean, the Yardbirds had cut some serious shapes at one point and obviously they were working in America. Then I met Jimmy and he was so charismatic. His contacts were phenomenal."[2]

Moreover, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant shared the same musical tastes, ranging from the psychedelic folk rock of the Incredible String Band to the urban blues of Muddy Waters and the rock 'n' roll of Chuck Berry. Trust developed rapidly between the two men, forming the basis for a solid friendship. When Page told Plant that he was still looking for a drummer (following

Opposite: Robert Plant and Jimmy Page at the Gladsaxe Teen Club in Copenhagen in September 1968, when Led Zeppelin was still called the New Yardbirds.



In 1968, Keith Moon, the legendary drummer of the Who, was thinking of starting a new band and co-invented the name "Lead Zeppelin."

LEAD ZEPPELIN?

In spring 1968, drummer Keith Moon and bassist John Entwistle were seriously considering quitting the Who to form a new group with Jimmy Page and Steve Winwood. In the presence of Peter Grant's right-hand man Richard Cole, Moon described the plan as a "lead balloon" and Entwistle added ironically that the group could be called "Lead Zeppelin." Peter Grant would later explain that he changed the spelling to "Led" Zeppelin in order to avoid any confusion with "lead, [as in] you up the garden path."[7]

another refusal, this time from Rolf Harris, who was committed to a tour of West Germany, and unsuccessful approaches to Aynsley Dunbar, Mitch Mitchell, and Bobby Graham), Plant had no hesitation in suggesting John Bonham, with whom he had shared a short-lived adventure in the blues-rock band Crawling King Snakes and then Band of Joy. John Bonham was currently in the Tim Rose band. "I went to see him play in London, then I knew immediately there was no one else,"[1] explains Jimmy Page.

The last piece of the puzzle was the bassist. During the Yardbirds' final tour, to the United States, Chris Dreja had decided to abandon music to become a rock photographer. John Paul Jones, whom Page had known for several years, having played alongside him on a number of recordings when they were both session musicians, got wind of the guitarist's plans and put himself forward.

In autumn 1968, the four musicians plus Peter Grant formed Superhype Music Inc. in order to ensure their total artistic freedom (that is to say freedom from hypothetical producers). The initial rehearsals began on August 19 in a room above a record shop on Gerrard Street in London's Soho district. "It was wall to wall amplifiers, terrible, all old," recalls John Paul Jones. "Robert had heard I was a session man, and he was wondering what was going to turn up—some old bloke with a pipe? So Jimmy said, 'Well, we're all here, what are we going to play?' And I said, 'I don't know. What do you know?' And Jimmy said, 'Do you know "Train Kept A-Rollin'"?' I told him no. And he said, 'It's easy, just G to A.' He counted it out, and the room just exploded. And we said, 'Right, we're on, this is it, this is going to work!!!'"[3]

It was as the New Yardbirds that the four musicians set off on a ten-date tour of Scandinavia (six other dates having been canceled) between September 7 (Gladsaxe, Denmark) and 15 (Gothenburg, Sweden), 1968. This was the last tour the Yardbirds had signed up for before Keith Relf and Jim McCarty decided to bail out. The set list comprised ten numbers: "Train Kept A-Rollin'," "I Can't Quit You Baby," "Dazed and Confused," "White Summer," "Communication Breakdown," "For Your Love," "You Shook Me," "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," "As Long as I Have You," and "How Many More Times." Three more gigs had been scheduled for when they got back home: at the Mayfair in Newcastle (October 4), the Marquee in London (October 18), and Liverpool University (October 19). It was not until October 25, at the University of Surrey in Guildford, that the group gave its first show—the first of many—as Led Zeppelin.

Jimmy Page at Manitou Beach, Michigan, in 1966. A *guitar hero* in the making.

Jimmy Page, the Magician of Epsom

By the time the members of the New Yardbirds came to pool their talents and enthusiasm, a momentous decision that would influence the rest of their lives, the four musicians had already played a part in the explosion of British rock music that had occurred in the early sixties.

James "Jimmy" Patrick Page was born on January 9, 1944, in the West London suburb of Heston. He was the only son of James Page, a human resources manager, and Patricia Elizabeth Gaffikin (of Irish background), a medical secretary. After moving a number of times, the Page family ended up at 34 Miles Road in Epsom. As if prophetically, "a guitar had been left at the house by a previous owner,"[1] recalls the future member of Led Zeppelin. To start with, Jimmy paid little attention to it, but before long, rock 'n' roll entered his life and this would change. "It was sitting around our living room for weeks and weeks," he writes. "I wasn't interested. Then I heard a couple of records that really turned me on, the main one being Elvis's 'Baby Let's Play House,' and I wanted to play it. I wanted to know what it was all about."[4] Then a schoolmate named Rod Wyatt played him a song by Lonnie Donegan, the father of skiffle. The thirteen-year-old Jimmy Page told his friend he had a guitar at home and Wyatt replied, "Well, bring it to school and I'll show you how to tune it and play a few chords."[4]

This first six-string was a Spanish guitar of unidentified make with steel strings. At that time the US pioneers of rock 'n' roll ruled the airwaves, and before long Jimmy's father, impressed with the progress his son was making, presented his son with an acoustic Hofner President Sunburst. Soon after that Jimmy had his first taste of an electric, specifically a Resonet Grazioso Futurama, a replica of the legendary Fender Stratocaster. He acquired guitar after guitar throughout his years of

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Previous spread: The New Yardbirds onstage in Scandinavia.

Left: In the early days of their career, the Who needed some help in the studio from a young guitar prodigy by the name of Jimmy Page.

JIMMY PAGE AND THE BEATLES

Jimmy Page never recorded with the Beatles. But according to journalist Tony Barrell, early in 1964 he played rhythm guitar on the recording of "Ringo's Theme" (the instrumental version of "This Boy") for the soundtrack of the movie *A Hard Day's Night*. Vic Flick disagrees. The guitarist with the George Martin Orchestra is adamant that the future leader of Led Zeppelin was not present in EMI's Studio Two during the recording of music for the Fab Four's first feature.

apprenticeship, one instrument that stands out being a Gretsch Chet Atkins Country Gentleman.

The teenager from Epsom had caught the bug. In 1960 he accompanied the English Beat poet Royston Ellis on guitar during a reading at the Mermaid Theatre in London. He then joined a local band, the Paramounts, and a few months later Red E. Lewis and the Red Caps, soon to be renamed Neil Christian and the Crusaders by their manager, Christopher Tidmarsh (Neil Christian being the name Tidmarsh adopted after deciding to replace the Red Caps' singer himself). The band specialized in covers of hits by Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley.

It was with this group, which worked the clubs of London and the south of England, that Jimmy Page, at just seventeen years of age, started to earn a reputation for himself as a guitarist, thanks not least to the single "A Little Bit of Someone Else"/"Get a Load of This," released in July 1963. From Liverpool the Beatles had already kicked off the British rock revolution, and the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, and the Animals were now shaking good old Britannia to her foundations. While Beatlemania was at its height, Jimmy transformed the family living room into a rehearsal room, recording studio, and meeting place for young musicians from Epsom, initially, and before long the London suburbs as well. Among them were the future guitar hero Jeff Beck, also born in 1944, and Glyn Johns, soon to become one of the most sought-after sound engineers in rock music. It was around the same time, albeit not in the family home but in a smoke-filled London venue, the Marquee, that Jimmy made the acquaintance of a certain Eric Clapton, then with the Roosters.

In 1963, at the urging of the very same Glyn Johns, Jimmy Page began working as a studio musician for three producers who were among the most famous on the rock scene: Shel Talmy, Mickie Most, and Andrew Loog Oldham. The list of performers and groups to whom he lent his musicality and skills as a virtuoso guitarist is indeed impressive. For the period January 1963 to September 1968 the names include Jet Harris and Tony Meehan ("Diamonds"), Lulu and the Luvvers ("Shout"/"Forget Me Baby"), the Rolling Stones ("Heart of Stone"), the American blues pianist Otis Spann ("Stirs Me Up"), Petula Clark ("Downtown"), the Who ("Bald Headed Woman," the B-side of the single "I Can't Explain"), the Kinks ("I'm a Lover Not a Fighter" and "I've Been Driving on Bald Mountain"), Donovan ("Sunshine Superman" and "The Hurdy Gurdy Man"), Nico ("The Last Mile"), David Bowie/The Manish Boys ("I Pity the Fool"), and Joe Cocker ("With a Little Help from My Friends"), and among French artists, Françoise Hardy ("Je n'attends plus personne"), Eddy Mitchell ("Si tu n'étais pas mon frère"), Johnny Hallyday ("À tout casser"), and Michel Polnareff ("La poupée qui fait non"). In 1966, in parallel with his work as a session musician, Jimmy Page agreed to join the Yardbirds—first of all as the bassist, alongside his friend Jeff Beck, and then as the guitarist—an offer he had previously declined in March 1965 when accepting would have meant stepping into Eric Clapton's shoes. His first gig with the London-based group was

at the Marquee in June. This was followed two months later by the first United States tour. After the Yardbirds came the New Yardbirds and finally Led Zeppelin.

Robert Plant, the Frenzied Singer of Black Country Blues

Robert Anthony Plant is a native of West Bromwich, a town not far from Birmingham in the British Midlands. He was born on August 20, 1948, to Annie Celia Plant (née Cain), a stay-at-home mother, and Robert Charles Plant, a civil engineer who had served in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. Robert Plant Sr. was a decent violinist who also nurtured a passion for soccer. And the singer's paternal grandfather, another Robert, had made a name for himself in the town by starting a brass band.

Robert and his younger sister Alison were brought up in the Catholic faith at the heart of the Black Country, so-named because of the coal mines and steel works that contributed to the United Kingdom's industrial development while making the region into the most polluted part of the country. The Plants belonged to the middle class. Taking full advantage of the economic policies of the Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan (whose slogan "You've never had it so good" was no lie), at the end of the fifties the family left West Bromwich for Hayley Green, a verdant suburb of Halesowen, some ten miles from Kidderminster, a town Robert would visit regularly. They lived in a redbrick house at 64 Causey Farm Road, not far from the Clent Hills, the inspiration for J. R. R. Tolkien's famous Middle-earth in *The Lord of the Rings*.

If the teenage Robert Plant immersed himself in Tolkien's heroic fantasy world and, more generally, the Celtic and Welsh legends in which the Midlands were steeped, he was also interested in the new sounds he

Robert Plant, a dandy from the Black Country who had caught the blues bug, at the beginning of 1968.

IS ROBERT PLANT A KLEPTOMANIAC?

Robert Plant was such an ardent admirer of Sonny Boy Williamson, the singer admitted in 1970, that at a concert in Birmingham in 1965 he slipped into the bluesman's dressing room and stole one of his harmonicas, "which I still got at home"![18]

heard on the radio: Bill Haley, Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent, and Eddie Cochran on the one hand, and Lonnie Donegan on the other. It was Elvis who made the biggest impression on him—to such an extent that he began to spend hours in front of his mirror mimicking the King's moves. At the King Edward VI Grammar School for Boys in Stourbridge, he made friends with Gary Tolley, a fan of the same rock 'n' roll singers, but with an even greater passion for blues pioneers such as Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, and, especially, Sonny Boy Williamson II. While Britain was beginning to sway to the rhythm of the Beatles and groups that had emerged from the local Brumbeat scene, such as the Spencer Davis Group, Plant and Tolley began to explore the blues scene in Stourbridge and the surrounding area, notably the Swiss Café and the Seven Stars Blues Club, where Robert's father regularly took him—despite Robert Sr.'s reservations about his son's consuming passion. In fact, Robert's parents had quite different hopes for him, and made him take up a traineeship as a certified accountant.

Robert got his real start in music with the Delta Blues Band, while at the same time jamming with other musicians, notably Chris Wood (who would later join Traffic), Andy Silvester, Stan Webb, Christine Perfect (soon to be McVie, of Fleetwood Mac), members of Sounds of Blue and future members of Chicken Shack. The guitarist of the Delta Blues Band, a certain Perry Foster, enthralled Plant with his eight-string guitar, on which he sounded every bit as good as Big Joe Williams. Showing little aptitude for numbers, Robert Plant left home at the age of sixteen and in 1964 began singing and playing harmonica with the Crawling King Snakes, a band from the neighboring town of Kidderminster whose drummer was one John Bonham. Taking their name from a blues number, the Crawling King Snakes had an ephemeral existence. In fact they lasted just long enough to support the Spencer Davis Group, Gene Vincent, and the Walker Brothers in concert, and for Bonham and Plant to become firm friends. In 1966, Plant joined the group Listen (initially called the Tennessee Teens), with whom he recorded the single "You Better Run" (a cover of the Young Rascals song), which was released by CBS in 1966 without the slightest glimmer of success. Two solo singles, "Our Song" (an adaptation of the Italian ballad "La Musica è finita") and "Long Time Coming," both released in 1967, also went largely unnoticed. In reality it was with Band of Joy—formed in 1966 before going through three different lineups, the last of which, in 1968, comprised Mick Strode (guitar), John Kelsey (keyboards), John Hill (bass), and John Bonham (drums)—that Robert Plant was able to launch his career, thanks mainly to the support of the influential DJ John Peel. After recording a demo at Regent Sound Studios in London (with covers of Buffalo Springfield's "For What It's Worth," the traditional "Hey Joe," and original compositions "Memory Lane" and "Adriatic Sea View"), the group broke up for good, leaving the future lead singer of Led Zeppelin high and dry. Plant nevertheless managed to form a duo with Alexis Korner, one of the fathers of British blues, before joining Obbstweedle, his final band before the decisive encounter with Jimmy Page and Peter Grant.

John Bonham: Drum Pyrotechnics

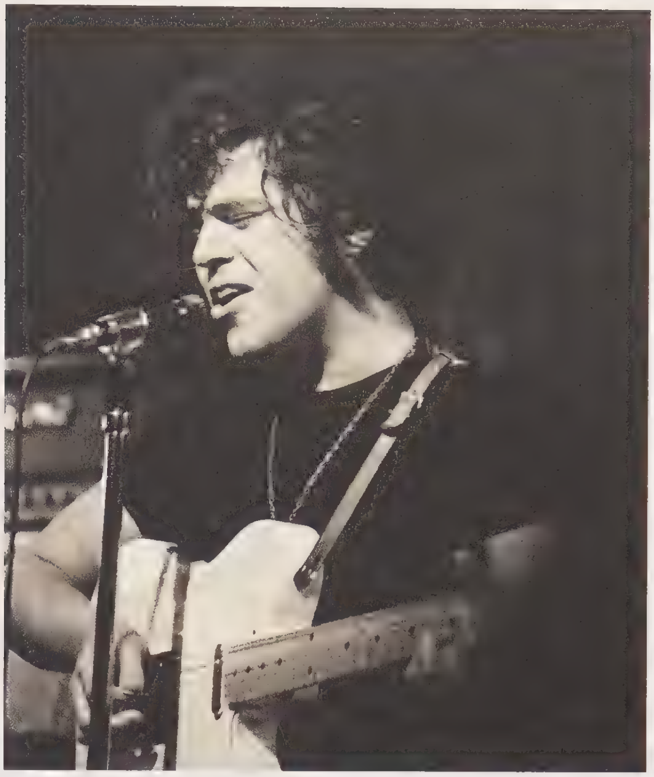
John Henry Bonham was born to Joan Isobel (née Sargent) and Jack Bonham on May 31, 1948. Although he entered the world in Redditch, Worcestershire, he spent his childhood in the neighboring town of Kidderminster, where his father was a carpenter. While

A MISSED VOCATION?

All Your Own was a children's television program broadcast on BBC One between 1952 and 1961. On April 4, 1958, a fourteen-year-old Jimmy Page could be seen on the show playing his acoustic Hofner President with three of his friends (on guitar, double bass, and drums). Interviewed by the presenter Huw Wheldon, the young Jimmy declared that he wanted to pursue a career in biological research, focusing on cancer and microbes…

The five members of Band of Joy photographed at Holland Park School in London in 1968. Left to right: Robert Plant, John Bonham, Kevyn Gammond (guitar), Chris Brown (keyboards), and Paul Lockey (bass).

so many British teenagers were growing up to the sound of the pioneers of rock 'n' roll, Bonham preferred jazz, developing a boundless admiration for Sonny Payne (Harry James's drummer, whom he had been taken to see, while still a child, by his father), Gene Krupa, Max Roach, and Buddy Rich. His ambition, then, was to become a drummer, and indeed he had been showing a special interest in percussion ever since he was five. Whatever he could find in the kitchen at home—and especially his mother's cooking pots—helped him, little by little, to develop a good sense of rhythm…and to drive his parents to distraction. On his tenth birthday his mother gave him a snare drum, and then at fifteen his first, "prehistoric" (as he would later describe it), drum kit. John was clearly extremely talented. In 1964, after turning sixteen, he quit school in order to work with his father, but above all so that he could devote all his free time to the drums. Even at this tender age, his drumming was characterized by an uncommon power, which would later be combined with a formidable swing. This was the alchemy that would turn Bonzo, as he was later nicknamed, into one of the greatest of rock drummers. For the time being he played with the Blue Star Trio alongside Terry Beal (vocals, guitar, composition) and Mick Ellis (vocals, guitar), before moving to Terry Webb and the Spiders, and then the Senators, comprising Terry Beal, Trevor McGowan (vocals, guitar), Graham Dennis (vocals, guitar), and Bill Ford (vocals, bass). This third band was something of a milestone as they would record "She's a Mod" (included on the compilation *Brum Beat*, John Bonham in December 1968, after hooking up again with his friend Robert Plant (plus Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones) in Led Zeppelin.



The singer-guitarist Tim Rose. John Bonham was the drummer in the American songwriter's band when Jimmy Page decided to go hear him play.

released by Dial Records in 1964), at the Hollick & Taylor Studios in Birmingham, the first-ever recording by the future Led Zeppelin drummer. Other local bands that would contribute to Bonham's apprenticeship in the Midlands include Pat Wayne and the Beachcombers later in 1964, the Nicky James Movement (with Roy Wood and Bev Bevan, later of the Move, and Mike Pinder, later of the Moody Blues) and Steve Brett and the Mavericks the following year, and Danny King & the Mayfair Set and A Way of Life (with future Fairport Convention member Dave Pegg) in 1966. By this time, John Bonham had married Pat Phillips (in 1965) and was living in a flat in Dudley, the newlyweds' first marital home having been a trailer belonging to Bonham's parents.

In 1967, Bonzo succeeded Nigel Knowles in the Crawling King Snakes. This band had Ian "Inky" Watts and Johnny Pasternak on guitar, Bruce "Maverick" Oakes on bass, and a young, blond-haired dandy from West Bromwich, otherwise known as Robert Plant, on lead vocals. A real bond developed between the singer and the drummer. And when Robert Plant formed, and was recruiting for, Band of Joy, John Bonham joined the group during its final incarnations in 1967–68, having briefly played in Locomotive and hooked up again with A Way of Life in the meantime. "In came this fantastic guitarist, Kevyn [Gammond], who's also with Bronco now, and we hit it off well," explains Plant. "We had a good bass-player and John Bonham came in on drums. It was debatable whether he'd join because it was a long way to go and pick him up and we didn't know whether we would have the petrol money to get over to Redditch and back! We always laugh about that."[5]

In June 1968, after Band of Joy split up, John Bonham was invited to drum for Tim Rose. The rest is rock 'n' roll legend…the Country Club performance in front of an impressed Jimmy Page, the fifty or so telegrams sent by Robert Plant and Peter Grant offering him a place in the band—but ignored by the drummer, who had other offers from Joe Cocker and Chris Farlowe, and, eventually, Bonham's decision to come along to an initial rehearsal in London. "It wasn't a question of who had the best prospects, but […] which music was going to be right," he explains. "When I first got offered the job, I thought the Yardbirds were finished, because in England they had been forgotten. Still I thought, 'Well, I've got nothing anyway so anything is really better than nothing.' I knew Jimmy was a good guitarist and that Robert was a good singer, so even if we didn't have any success, at least it would be a pleasure to play in a good group… So I decided I liked their music better than Cocker's or Farlowe's."[3]

John Paul Jones, Session Musician and Musical Director

The third musician to join Jimmy Page in the New Yardbirds was John Paul Jones, real name John Baldwin, born on January 3, 1946, into a family of musicians living in Sidcup, Kent. His mother was a singer and dancer

and his father, Joe Baldwin, a pianist and big band arranger during the swing era (notably with Ambrose and His Orchestra), having previously accompanied silent movies on the piano in motion-picture theaters. John started to teach himself the piano at the age of six. "I was a choirmaster and organist at our local church at the age of 14. That's how I earned the money to pay my first bass guitar,"[6] he recalls.

Because his parents moved around a lot with their work, John was sent to a boarding school in Blackheath when he was just five, and then to senior school in Eltham Green. He wasn't exactly a diligent student, by far preferring music to his lessons. His father wanted him to learn the saxophone, claiming that the instrument would open up a range of opportunities, but at the age of thirteen the teenager bought his first bass, a Dallas Tuxedo, convinced of the instrument's potential. The solo played by bassist Phil Upchurch on the track "You Can't Sit Down" (1961) came as a real revelation to the young John Baldwin and confirmed his intuition about the future of the electric bass. He soon joined various bands, notably one with which he got to play at US military bases, and also played in a piano-bass duo with his father, performing at local festivities and other

Opposite: John Paul Jones was already a seasoned musician by the time he joined Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Bonham.

Left: John Paul Jones playing his Fender Jazz Bass in Copenhagen on September 7, 1968, when the quartet was still called the New Yardbirds.

miscellaneous occasions. His influences were as much classical (Rachmaninov) as blues (Big Bill Broonzy) and jazz (Charles Mingus). At the beginning of the sixties, having failed to get into the Royal College of Music in London, he abandoned his studies and started looking for work in London's Soho. He soon made the acquaintance of the bassist Jet Harris, who, after quitting the Shadows, had formed Jet Harris and Tony Meehan with the drummer Tony Meehan (also ex-Shadows) and was having some nice hits, including "Diamonds," with Jimmy Page on acoustic guitar, which topped the UK charts in 1963. For this recording, Harris played guitar, leaving the bass to John Baldwin. The band, which also included John McLaughlin on rhythm guitar, toured a great deal in the UK. It was presumably during one of the many concerts by the quartet that the young bassist first met Peter Grant—then driving a van for rock 'n' roll trailblazer Gene Vincent.

The Jet Harris and Tony Meehan experience lasted for exactly eighteen months and helped to familiarize the young John Baldwin with the London music scene and the music business generally. Having changed his name to John Paul Jones—the idea of Rolling Stones manager and Immediate Records founder Andrew Loog Oldham, inspired by a poster for John Farrow's 1959 movie *John Paul Jones* about a naval hero during the American Revolution—the bassist started working as a session musician and musical director/arranger for Oldham in 1964. That same year he recorded a debut single "Baja" (a Lee Hazlewood cover), which was coupled with an original composition, "A Foggy Day in Vietnam," under his own name and released by Pye Records in April 1964. Before long, John Paul had become one of the most sought-after session musicians in the United Kingdom. Most prominently, he played alongside Jimmy Page on a number of Stones sessions ("Each and Every Day of the Year," "We're Wastin' Time," and "[Walkin' thru the] Sleepy City," on the 1975 album *Metamorphosis*), and also on P. P. Arnold's "Angel of the Morning," Nico's "The Last Mile" (a song co-written by Jimmy Page and Andrew Loog Oldham), and Lionel Bart's "Maggie May."

In 1965 and 1966, while still collaborating with Oldham, John Paul Jones was appointed musical director for Robert Stigwood and Mickie Most, an association that gave rise to some of his finest arrangements: "No Milk Today" for Herman's Hermits; the albums *Sunshine Superman*, *Mellow Yellow*, and *The Hurdy Gurdy Man* for Donovan; "The Boat That I Row" and "To Sir with Love" for Lulu; "Little Games" and "Ten Little Indians"

John Paul Jones in the studio in 1965. It was the Rolling Stones' producer Andrew Loog Oldham (center), who, after watching John Farrow's eponymous movie, had the idea of renaming the musician. **Opposite:** The Stones in 1967, the year of "She's a Rainbow," for which John Paul Jones wrote the string arrangements.

for the Yardbirds—not to forget Françoise Hardy's "En vous aimant bien" and "Mais il y a des soirs" on the album *Ma jeunesse fout le camp*…(1967). By 1968, the list had grown even longer, with work for Cliff Richard, Cat Stevens, Dusty Springfield, Tom Jones, the Everly Brothers, Champion Jack Dupree, Bo Diddley, and Marianne Faithfull. Worthy of special mention are Jones's string arrangements on "She's a Rainbow" on the Rolling Stones psychedelic album *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (1967).

By 1968 he had had enough. With forty or fifty arrangements to write every month, he needed a change. It was at this point that he began looking for a group to join. His wife Maureen—whom he had married the year before (they would go on to have three daughters together, Tamara, Jacinda, and Kiera)—told him about an ad Jimmy Page had placed in *Disc* magazine. Jones explains that he called the guitarist straightaway: "'Jim, how're you doing? Have you got a group yet?' He said, 'I haven't got anybody yet.' And I said, 'Well, if you want a bass player, give me a ring.'"[3]

As a result of all this work, the bassist had a remarkable track record by the time he embarked on the New Yardbirds project. It was June 1968. That same month, Iron Butterfly, Pink Floyd, and Vanilla Fudge released *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, *A Saucerful of Secrets*, and *Renaissance*, respectively. The time had clearly come for Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham to show their mettle.

YARDBIRDS AND JAILBIRDS

The group formed in June 1963 by Keith Relf, Paul Samwell-Smith, and Jim McCarty was originally called the Most Blueswailing Yardbirds. The word *yardbird* can have several meanings. As well as alluding to an actual bird, its slang connotations include "rookie," "a soldier confined to barracks" and "an African American convict." Keith Relf was an enthusiastic reader of Jack Kerouac, that iconic figure of the Beat Generation (*On the Road*), who was in turn a fan of Charlie Parker, the founder of modern jazz known (in addition to plain "Bird") as "Yardbird."

THE YARDBIRDS: A GROUP WITH THREE GUITAR HEROES

Muddy Waters played a key role in popularizing the blues in the United Kingdom as early as 1958, followed four years later by the artists who took part in the American Folk Blues Festival (in particular John Lee Hooker, Willie Dixon, and Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee). Most importantly, these artists transmitted the bug to a whole generation of self-taught musicians. In London, Alexis Korner, Cyril Davies, and a little later the five members of the Rolling Stones became the first self-appointed ambassadors of those magical twelve bars and pioneers of the British blues craze.

In 1963 the Blue Sounds took up the cause. Keith Relf (lead vocals, harmonica), Paul Samwell-Smith (bass, guitar), and Jim McCarty (drums), who had previously played acoustic blues together in the Metropolitan Blues Quartet, formed the band. They were joined by Chris Dreja (bass, guitar) and Anthony "Top" Topham (guitar). Renamed the Most Blueswailing Yardbirds, and then simply the Yardbirds, the quintet drew on the repertoire of their illustrious African American elders such as Howlin' Wolf ("Smokestack Lightning"), John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson ("Good Morning Little Schoolgirl"), Muddy Waters ("Rollin' and Tumblin'"), and Bo Diddley ("I'm a Man"), a repertoire they enhanced, by contrast with the Stones, with long improvisations that became known as "rave-ups."

A Little Help from Giorgio

It was at this point that Giorgio Gomelsky came into the picture. A fan of jazz and the blues, Gomelsky was also the owner of the Crawdaddy Club at the Station Hotel in the London suburb of Richmond. In January 1963 he hired the Rolling Stones to play there and became their first manager. When the Stones set off to conquer the world following the release of their first single ("Come On"/"I Want to Be Loved") in June 1963, Gomelsky set his sights on the Yardbirds. Soon after the band took up its residency at the Crawdaddy, the young Tony Topham was forced by his parents to give up his place in the band and was replaced by a young guitarist from Ripley, Surrey, who had previously played with the Roosters (alongside Tom McGuinness) and Casey Jones & the Engineers. The newcomer was called Eric Clapton, a guitarist whose feel for the blues had already, even at this early stage, attracted attention. And thus it was with Clapton that the Yardbirds stepped from obscurity onto the Crawdaddy stage and then cut their first album, a live LP recorded at the Marquee Club on March 20, 1964. *Five Live Yardbirds*, released in December 1964, included impassioned covers of Chuck Berry's "Too Much Monkey Business," Eddie Boyd's "Five Long Years," and John Lee Hooker's "Louise." In the studio, they recorded their first two singles: "I Wish You Would"/"A Certain Girl" and "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl"/"I Ain't Got You," released in August and October 1964, respectively. Mention should also be made of *Sonny Boy Williamson and the Yardbirds*, recorded at the Crawdaddy Club on December 8, 1963, although not released until January 1966.

The Yardbirds in 1964 with Eric Clapton (second from right) and the producer Giorgio Gomelsky (far left).

Jimmy Page Approached

The Yardbirds' various recordings having failed to find an audience, Giorgio Gomelsky decided to try a new approach with the Yardbirds: pop. While this proved to be a shrewd move commercially, with "For Your Love" (written by the Manchester songwriter and future 10cc member Graham Gouldman) reaching number 3 on the UK hit parade in March 1965, it also led to the departure of Eric Clapton. (This was to some extent forced by Gomelsky, who invited the guitarist to leave.) Clapton wanted to remain faithful to the blues, and this he did in brilliant style with John Mayall's Blues Breakers and their legendary album *Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton* (July 1966).

Who to choose as his replacement? Giorgio Gomelsky immediately thought of Jimmy Page, the full extent of whose talent he had seen for himself in the studio. However, Page had a number of commitments to honor and was probably reluctant to fall out with his friend Clapton, so he declined. He nevertheless suggested the Yardbirds' manager-producer go and listen to Jeff Beck, who, ever since making his debut on the London rhythm 'n' blues scene in 1963 (under the wing of Rolling Stones pianist Ian Stewart), had been knocking his contemporaries dead not only with his flamboyant virtuosity but with his sonic innovation (feedback, distortion…) as well.

Jeff Beck and the Psychedelic Turn

A new chapter for the Yardbirds therefore began in March 1965 with the arrival of Jeff Beck, who was soon transformed by Gomelsky into a veritable icon of Swinging London. The new lineup launched itself with the single "Heart Full of Soul" (another Gouldman composition), released in the United Kingdom in June 1965. This was followed by more singles including "Evil Hearted You" (October 1965), "Shapes of Things" (February 1966), and "Over Under Sideways Down" (May 1966), which saw things take a psychedelic turn and resulted in several US tours. It was during one of these tours that the group recorded "The Train Kept A-Rollin'" at the ultra-famous studio Sam Phillips Recording in Memphis and "I'm a Man" at the no-less-renowned Chess Record Studio in Chicago.

As these recordings attest, Jeff Beck generally gave brilliant performances that rewrote the language of rock

WAS LUTON THE LAST?

Keith Relf, Jimmy Page, Chris Dreja, and Jim McCarty went their separate ways after the concluding show of the US tour, on June 5, 1968. Or did they? There was supposed to have been another gig, at Luton Technical College in Bedfordshire, on July 7. Did this gig actually take place or was it merely scheduled? Peter Grant himself has admitted having no recollection of a Yardbirds gig in Luton.

Left: Under the influence of Jeff Beck, the Yardbirds did a 180-degree turn and embraced psychedelia with the blessing of Swinging London.

Opposite: The Yardbirds with their two *guitar heroes*. Left to right: Jeff Beck, Jim McCarty, Chris Dreja, Jimmy Page, and Keith Relf.

guitar. Jimmy Page would later enthuse that "[Beck's] imagination on those Yardbirds albums is incredible."[9] However, his increasingly erratic behavior (such as his repeated refusal to play certain gigs in order to spend time with his girlfriend, the American actress Mary Hughes) eventually affected the cohesion of the group. Even Gomelsky grew tired of it all, and after the recording of "Over Under Sideways Down," he ceded his rights in the London band to the journalist and author Simon Napier-Bell, who became the Yardbirds' co-manager with bassist Paul Samwell-Smith. This change of management was followed by the excellent *Yardbirds* (also known as *Roger the Engineer*).

Jimmy Page and *Blow-Up*

By the time the album was released, on July 15, 1966, Samwell-Smith had already decided to leave the group following a bitter argument. Jeff Beck, who had been trying since the beginning of the year to convince Jimmy Page to come and join him in the Yardbirds, finally got his way in May—the same month that Beck, Page, John Paul Jones, Keith Moon, and Nicky Hopkins recorded the single "Beck's Bolero" (inspired by Ravel's *Boléro*). The future Led Zeppelin guitar hero had become the Yardbirds' bassist. This new lineup (Relf, Beck, Dreja, Page, and McCarty) threw itself into a twenty-five-date European tour that kicked off at the Marquee on June 21, before setting off almost immediately after, on August 5, for a US tour, during the course of which Dreja switched to bass and Page to guitar. This was the ideal moment for Beck and Page to record "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago," a psychedelic pop-rock number, released that autumn, which demonstrates the extraordinary potential of the two sparring guitar heroes. John Paul Jones also plays bass on this track. After their return to London, the Yardbirds, in their new configuration, undertook a package tour of the United Kingdom in the company of the Rolling Stones, Terry Reid, Long John Baldry, and Ike & Tina Turner. On October 14, they shot a classic scene for

Blow-Up (1966)—Michelangelo Antonioni's brilliant movie about Swinging London—performing "Stroll On" (a psychedelic version of "Train Kept A-Rollin'") while Jeff Beck smashes up his guitar. They then returned to the United States to play the Fillmore West in San Francisco and appear on *American Bandstand*, or more accurately the Caravan of Stars tour moderated by Dick Clark. This was too much for Jeff Beck, who decided to call it a day.

The album *Little Games* (July 1967, destined for the United States only) was therefore recorded as a quartet. It was produced by Mickie Most, who, with his assistant Peter Grant, had acquired Simon Napier-Bell's interests in the band. In reality, Most was mainly looking after Jeff Beck's solo career while Grant presided over the destiny of the Yardbirds. This continued until the final tour of the British outfit, to the United States, in July 1968. Keith Relf and Jim McCarty would go on to form the folk-rock/prog-rock group Renaissance, and Chris Dreja would discover that he was really a photographer at heart.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

At the instigation of Peter Barton (now of Rock Artist Management), the Yardbirds re-formed with original members Jim McCarty and Chris Dreja, supported by John Idan (vocals, bass), in 1992, when they gave a hugely successful comeback concert at the Marquee. The year 2003 saw the release of the album *Birdland*, on which McCarty, Dreja, and Idan are joined by Gypie Mayo (vocals, guitar) and Alan Glen (songwriting, harmonica), with guest appearances from Slash, Joe Satriani, and Brian May. The Yardbirds have kept the blues-rock flame burning ever since.

1. GOOD TIMES BAD TIMES 2. BABE I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU 3. YOU SHOOK ME 4. DAZED AND CONFUSED 5. YOUR TIME IS GONNA COME 6. BLACK MOUNTAIN SIDE 7. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN 8. I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY 9. HOW MANY MORE TIMES OUTTAKES : BABY COME ON HOME (TRIBUTE TO BERT BURNS) / SUGAR MAMA

LED ZEPPELIN

ALBUM **LED ZEPPELIN**

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: March 31, 1969

United States: January 12, 1969

Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: 588171

Number 1 (Spain), Number 6 (United Kingdom), Number 10 (United States)

The four members of Led Zeppelin posing in front of a Jaguar during the first photo session for their debut album, December 1968.

LED ZEPPELIN: A DAZZLING DISPLAY OF BLUES ROCK

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham recorded the nine tracks that make up their first album before even signing a record contract. “The group had only been together for two-and-half weeks when we recorded it! We’d had 15 hours rehearsal before shooting over to Scandinavia for a few gigs, then straight after that we cut the album.”[10]

Led Zeppelin and Atlantic

Once the New Yardbirds had been formed, Peter Grant’s first job was to find them a record company. In September 1968 it was a somewhat apprehensive manager who entered the offices of Pye Records, a label for whom Page and Jones had worked as valued session musicians. The name Yardbirds had lost its magic, and the record industry could see little point in signing a successor band. “I went to see their boss Louis Benjamin and asked for an advance. The figure was £17,500. He just said: ‘You’ve got to be joking.’”[7] He got the same reaction from Warner Bros. executive Mo Ostin.

Meanwhile the bosses at Columbia, in spite of everything, were well aware of Jimmy Page’s potential, the guitarist having remained very popular, above all in the United States. They were convinced that Page’s new group, named Led Zeppelin after the “New Yardbirds” idea had been abandoned, were not going to sign with any label but the Columbia subsidiary Epic, for the simple reason that Epic had been the Yardbirds’ US label (with EMI on the other side of the pond) and held all the rights, including over each of the band members. A&R executive Dick Asher recalls the initial meeting between Clive Davis, the president of Columbia, and Peter Grant (supported by his lawyer Steve Weiss): “And we talked and talked about all sorts of things. It just went on and on but there was no mention of Led Zeppelin. Finally Clive said, ‘Well, aren’t we going to talk about Jimmy Page?’ Grant replied, ‘Oh, no, we’ve already signed the Zeppelin to Atlantic.’ At which point Davis lost his cool and went bersek.”[11] Actually, the Columbia president had been convinced that Jimmy Page was still contracted to Epic (and EMI) as a former member of the Yardbirds. However, when the guitarist joined the group in 1966, he didn’t sign an exclusivity clause, meaning that he no longer had any obligations to them. Dick Asher continues: “Grant didn’t bat an eye, just thanked them for their hospitality and told them he’d see them around, then strode leisurely out of the office with a big smile on his face.”[11]

Peter Grant had indeed already done a deal with Atlantic Records. Atlantic vice president Jerry Wexler had got wind of Led Zeppelin’s formation from the singer

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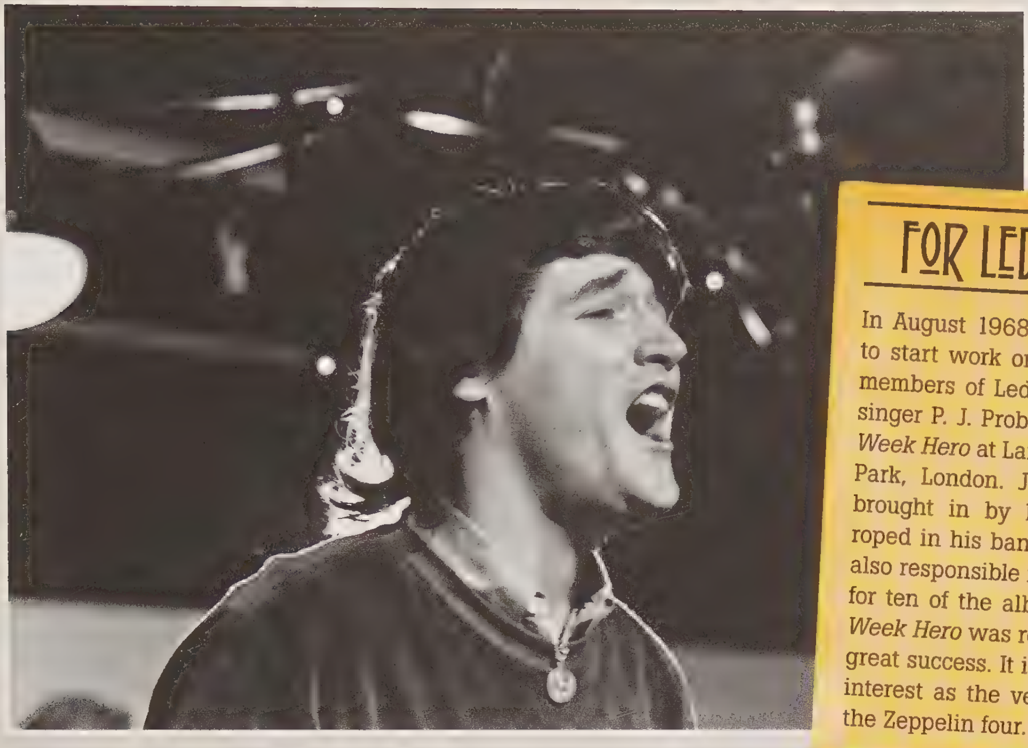
Ahmet Ertegun (left), the charismatic founder of Atlantic—the record company chosen by Peter Grant for his protégés—with bluesman Big Joe Turner (right).

Dusty Springfield, who had recorded with John Paul Jones and was a fan of Jimmy Page's virtuosity. Wexler called Grant to tell him he was prepared to sign the group. "But you don't know my price,"[3] replied Grant. As soon as the autumn sessions for the group's first album, held at Olympic Studios, had concluded, the manager got on the plane to New York with a copy of the tape under his arm, and knocked at the offices of Ahmet Ertegun (the founder of Atlantic Records) and Jerry Wexler, then at 1841 Broadway. Why Atlantic rather than Columbia? Apparently not only because it was the record company (or at least its subsidiary Atco was) of Cream, Vanilla Fudge, and Iron Butterfly—three groups that had pushed the boundaries of rock, or were still doing so, and which the four members of Led Zeppelin cited as role models—but also because it was the label of some of the biggest African American musicians, from Ray Charles to Aretha Franklin to John Coltrane. Another reason was that Jimmy Page had felt exploited and undervalued at Epic, a label that he judged inefficient. And finally because Ahmet Ertegun and Jerry Wexler were great record industry professionals and highly respectful of their artists.

On November 23, 1968, a five-year deal was signed with an advance of $143,000 for the first year plus $77,000 expenses, in other words a total of $220,000,



The American singer P. J. Proby.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

In August 1968, before entering the studio to start work on their first album, the four members of Led Zeppelin helped American singer P. J. Proby to make his album *Three Week Hero* at Lansdowne Studios in Holland Park, London. John Paul Jones had been brought in by Proby's producer and had roped in his bandmates as well. Jones was also responsible for the string arrangements for ten of the album's twelve tracks. *Three Week Hero* was released in April 1969 to no great success. It is nevertheless of historical interest as the very first outing on disc by the Zeppelin four.

the largest sum ever agreed to be paid to a group (or artist) before recording their first single or album. To put this figure into perspective, John Bonham had never earned more than £40 and Robert Plant more than £25 a week previously! A new chapter in their lives was being written. With a contract like this the drummer was able to buy himself a Jaguar XK150 without thinking twice, and the singer could dream of a blissful future with Maureen, whom he had married a few days before (on November 9). Jimmy Page, meanwhile, had obtained complete control over production, sleeve design, promotion, and even the tour programs…He had also succeeded in getting his group signed by Atlantic Records rather than Atco records, which was a first, given that the subsidiary had been the label reserved for white bands up to that point.

The Quest for Absolute Rock

Led Zeppelin (or *Led Zeppelin I*, as the album would later become unofficially known) comprises nine tracks that had already been honed onstage. This explains the speed with which they were laid down in the studio as well as the energy and efficiency of the performances and the small number of overdubs required. Officially, four of the tracks are covers—"Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" by Anne Bredon, "You Shook Me" by Willie Dixon and J. B. Lenoir, "I Can't Quit You Baby" by Dixon alone, and "Dazed and Confused" by (or more accurately inspired by) Jake Holmes. The remaining five are original compositions, albeit largely influenced by African American bluesmen. The musical approach is completely original, however, and demonstrates an utterly new notion of rock music that involves imbuing it with a hitherto unknown energy and urgency. This new approach could be described as hard rock, although by no means excludes the occasional incursion into folk or experimental music.

This first offering on vinyl is essentially a blues-rock album based in most instances on riffs Jimmy Page had come up with a few months earlier with the Yardbirds. However, it would be wrong to see Led Zeppelin as no more than the legitimate successor to John Mayall's Blues Breakers, the Yardbirds, or the bands of the second blues boom, such as Savoy Brown, Chicken Shack, or Ten Years After. Or, for that matter, the Rolling Stones before them. If an antecedent absolutely has to be found, it would be better to look in the direction of Cream—Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham in a sense taking up the kind of rock epic that Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, and Ginger Baker had stopped writing as a result of their separation after the double album *Wheels of Fire* (released in July 1968). Setting out from the blues, the four musicians of Led Zeppelin sought to take a number of different musical worlds by storm: psychedelic rock with "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," the folk tradition with "Black Mountain Side," but also, and most importantly, hard rock, of which they were to become the British pioneers (before Deep Purple or Black Sabbath) with "Good Times Bad Times," "Dazed and Confused," and

Led Zeppelin in San Francisco on the day their first album was released.

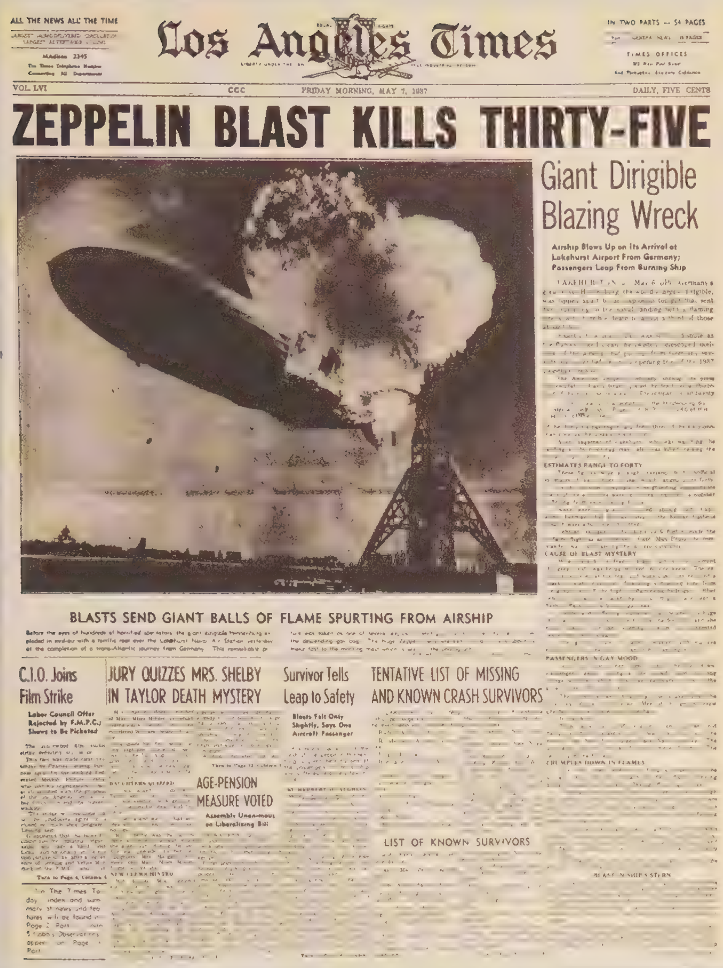
"Communication Breakdown." To listen to the nine tracks on this debut album is to discover that the music of Led Zeppelin is a quest for absolute rock music—and a music of chaos—an ambition attained to some extent through the virtuosity of Page, Jones, and Bonham, and the rare sensuality of Plant's singing.

Once the album was finished, but prior to launch, the group started looking for concert dates in order to promote their debut but had a great deal of trouble finding an opportunity to get themselves heard on their home soil. All Peter Grant could come up with for his protégés were relatively poorly paid bookings. No one was interested in Led Zeppelin in this late autumn of 1968. People still thought of the group as the Yardbirds, who had gone out of fashion. Ironically, when they did get a gig, it was under their previous stage name. "We tried to play in England several times, trying to get billed as Led Zeppelin," recalls Robert Plant, "and they always put 'the New Yardbirds' on the posters, every time."[8] Jimmy Page was deeply disappointed by the way the British music scene rejected them: "It was a joke…we really had a bad time. They just wouldn't accept anything new…We were given a chance in America."[3]

Faced with this deadlock, Peter Grant and Jimmy Page decided to try their luck on the other side of the Atlantic. The group flew out on Christmas Day and played their first gig of their first North American tour in Denver on December 26. This was the moment they finally found their audience and started to inscribe the name Led Zeppelin into the annals of rock music—and with what style! As Robert Plant would aptly observe, "America saved us."[8]

The Birth of a Legend

Led Zeppelin was released on January 12, 1969, the day of their concert at Fillmore West in San Francisco. Despite the success of this American tour (which started on December 26, 1968, and ended on February 15, 1969), *Rolling Stone*, that iconic magazine of the counterculture, shot the album down in flames. John Mendelsohn described it as a pale copy of Jeff Beck's *Truth* and decided that Jimmy Page, gifted as he was on the guitar, was a "limited producer and a writer of weak, unimaginative songs."[39] In the United Kingdom the reviews were of a very different tenor and had the effect of erasing the humiliation suffered at the end of 1968.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ZEPPELIN BLAST KILLS THIRTY-FIVE

Giant Dirigible Blazing Wreck

Airship Blows Up on Its Arrival at Lakehurst Airport From Germany; Passengers Leap From Burning Ship

ESTIMATES RANGE TO FORTY

CAUSE OF BLAST MYSTERY

PASSENGERS IN GAY MOOD

CRUMPLES DOWN IN FLAMES

BLASTS SEND GIANT BALLS OF FLAME SPURTING FROM AIRSHIP

C.I.O. Joins Film Strike

Labor Council Offer Rejected by F.M.P.C.; Shows to Be Picketed

JURY QUIZZES MRS. SHELBY IN TAYLOR DEATH MYSTERY

AGE-PENSION MEASURE VOTED

Assembly Unanimous on Liberalizing Bill

Survivor Tells Leap to Safety

Blasts Felt Only Slightly, Says One Aircraft Passenger

TENTATIVE LIST OF MISSING AND KNOWN CRASH SURVIVORS

LIST OF KNOWN SURVIVORS

The *Hindenburg* disaster of May 6, 1937, makes the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

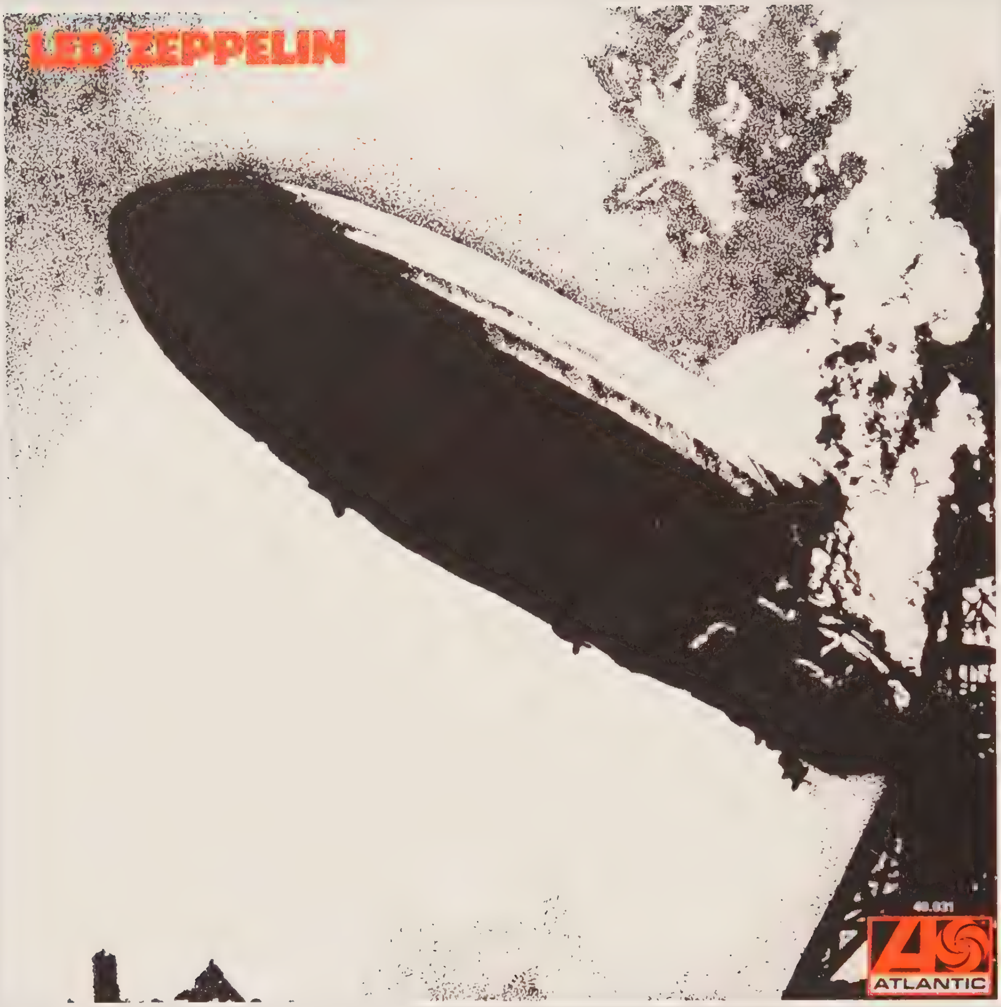
To the everlasting delight of collectors, the sleeve of the first album went through many different versions. Nine have been cataloged so far. The first has turquoise lettering on the back, and on the central roundel the copyright of certain tracks is attributed to Superhype Music or Jewel Music. After this was rapidly withdrawn from sale, a second version has orange lettering with errors in the copyright attribution. Other pressings amended Superhype Music/Jewel Music to Warner Bros./7 Arts. In short, each of the nine displays notable differences, turning some of the different versions into collectors' items of considerable rarity.

On March 29, 1969, Chris Welch published an article in *Melody Maker* under the headline "Jimmy Page Triumphs": "Now, with his new group, the legend comes to life, and his work on guitar, acoustic, electric, and pedal steel varieties can be studied. He proves to be technical, tasteful, turbulent and torrid. His band is imaginative and exciting and Robert Plant is a new singer of stature."[12] Similarly, in the underground magazine *Oz*, Felix Dennis observed: "Few rock musicians in the world could hope to parallel the degree of technical assurance and gutsy emotion [Page] displays throughout these nine tracks. Exactly 84 seconds after the beginning of 'Good Times Bad Times,' the first cut, side one, Page does things with an electric guitar that might feebly be described as bewildering."[13] Dennis would even go so far as to compare this first release to albums of the caliber of Bob Dylan's *Bringing It All Back Home*, Cream's *Disraeli Gears*, Hendrix's *Are You Experienced*, and the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Following the example of *Melody Maker* and *Oz*, the general public greeted *Led Zeppelin* enthusiastically. The album climbed to number 6 on the UK hit parade and would remain on the charts for seventy-nine weeks. In the United States it rose to number 10, and in General Franco's Spain it topped the charts. In France and Germany, on the other hand, it only made it to number 19 and number 32, respectively. The album currently occupies twenty-ninth place on the *Rolling Stone* list of the five hundred best albums, and is ranked sixth of the twenty-one albums that, for *Q* magazine, have changed music. It has achieved double Platinum certification in the United Kingdom, eight times Platinum in the United States (with more than eight million copies sold), and entered the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2004! Sales to date amount to more than thirteen million copies.

The Sleeve

As stipulated in the contract with Atlantic Records, it was Jimmy Page who chose the visuals for *Led Zeppelin*. The cover photograph depicts the *LZ 129 Hindenburg*, the largest airship ever to have been built by Germany's Zeppelin Company, which made its maiden flight on March 4, 1936. Fourteen months later, on May 6, 1937, the aircraft was destroyed by fire while landing at Lakehurst, New Jersey, with the loss of thirty-five lives. The disaster was caught on various newsreels of the day,



The sleeve of the album *Led Zeppelin* featuring the name of the group and the Atlantic logo in addition to the photograph of the air disaster.

which meant that Jimmy Page was spoiled for choice when it came to selecting an image for the cover. Only the name Led Zeppelin and the Atlantic logo (turquoise or orange depending on the version) are printed over the black-and-white photo.

On the reverse of the cover (of the original vinyl) are portraits of the four musicians in soft shades of orange. This photograph was taken by ex-Yardbird Chris Dreja. "Jimmy let me shoot their rear album cover for their first album. They paid me twenty-one guineas. Jimmy and I had this great relationship about photographs because he trusted me implicitly. But also I used to make him look good!"[9]

The Recording

Although Peter Grant had booked Olympic Studios for three weeks, from September 27 to October 18, 1968, the recording of Led Zeppelin's debut album probably took no more than four sessions: September 27 and October 3, 10, and 15, the October 10 session serving merely to get "Baby Come On Home" (not used) in the can. Glyn Johns, the sound engineer, would describe the sessions as having extended over a period of nine days. On October 4 the group escaped from the confined atmosphere of the studio to give a single concert at the Mayfair in Newcastle.

Jimmy Page, who paid for the recording himself, utterly convinced of the outstanding potential of the group, is precise about the length of time taken (if only because he had to try to keep the costs down): "After 30 hours recorded time *Led Zeppelin I* was completed with a mix of acoustic, electric, rock, blues, avant-garde and experimental music, performed with vision, improvisation, attitude, and a bullet-proof blueprint."[1] John Paul Jones would specify that fifteen of these thirty hours were spent recording and the other fifteen mixing. In other words, the group made its first album with astonishing speed thanks to the earlier honing of all the songs during the Scandinavian tour from September 7–17 and the rehearsals organized by Page in Pangbourne immediately before entering the studio. According to Peter Grant, the album cost less than £1,800 to make (including the sleeve) and brought in more than £7 million.

Olympic
STUDIOS

The Olympic Studios building in Barnes, London.

After completing the recording of *Led Zeppelin I*, Glyn Johns was convinced that the rest of the music profession was going to be flabbergasted by the exceptional quality of the album. However, neither Mick Jagger nor George Harrison, to whom he gave sneak previews, got it or even took the slightest interest in the LP. Clearly, even the greats are not immune to an occasional lapse of judgment…

The chosen recording venue was Olympic Studios, established in 1957 by an impresario of just twenty-four years of age called Angus McKenzie. Shortly before, McKenzie had acquired a modest outfit called Olympia Studios in Fulham in southwest London. With the help of Dick Swettenham, who would go on to design the Helios consoles, he then founded Olympic Studios in the vast premises of a former synagogue on Carlton Street in London's West End. Unfortunately, in 1965 the lease was not renewed, and McKenzie sold his shares to Cliff Adams (founder of the Cliff Adams Singers) and John Shakespeare. The studios were relocated to 117–123 Church Road in Barnes on the banks of the river Thames, the premises of a former theater that had been converted into television and cinema studios at the end of the fifties. Having been the bastion of the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, Procol Harum, and the Moody Blues, Olympic Studios now became the temporary headquarters of Led Zeppelin.

By the group's side was the sound engineer Glyn Johns, who had known Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones since their time as session musicians (and in fact had known Page since the Epsom days). The engineer was extremely surprised when Page called him up one day and asked him to record an album he wanted to produce with a brand-new group he had formed with John Paul Jones on bass. Johns writes: “Knowing that anything these two had put together was bound to be pretty good, I turned up at Olympic a couple of weeks later, not having any real idea of what I was walking into. I was blown off my feet. The album that we made in the next nine days was a landmark in rock and roll history, taking it to another level altogether.”[14] And he continues: “Each session seemed to be more exciting than the last, as what they had prepared unraveled in front of me. All I had to do was press record, sit back, and try to contain the excitement of being in the same room with what was going on.”[14] Although the executive producer of the group's debut album was Peter Grant, the actual producer was Jimmy Page. His years as a session musician had developed in him a heightened awareness of the overall sonic image. And if *Led Zeppelin I* sounds as powerful and fresh today as it did when it was first recorded, this is mainly due to Page's talent. He had mastered the highly complex science of how to position the microphones. “You shouldn't really have to use EQ in the studio if the instruments sound good. It should all be done with microphones and microphone placement. The instruments that bleed into each other are what creates the ambience. Once you start cleaning everything up, you lose it. You lose that sort of halo that bleeding creates.”[9] His vision was fundamentally the same as that behind the first rockabilly or blues records, those made by Sun Records or Chess Records, for example. The sound he envisaged had to reflect as closely as possible what the musicians themselves heard and felt within the group. It had to be raw and subjected to the fewest possible tricks. This was an approach that would die out

Glyn Johns (right) with Keith Richards and Charlie Watts during the mixing of the Stones album *Let It Bleed*, 1969.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Originally, Robert Plant was not given a songwriting credit because he was still under contract with CBS, recording two singles there in 1967 ("Our Song"/"Laughin', Cryin', Laughin'" and "Long Time Coming"/"I've Got a Secret").

during the seventies in favor of a cleaner, often clinical sound that culminated in the arrival of all-digital in the eighties.

On the album, however, this bleeding of one sound source into another was, in certain cases, an involuntary, unwanted effect. Jimmy gives the example of Robert Plant's voice, which was so powerful that the track on which it was recorded would spill into the other tracks on the tape recorder. This "magnetic echo" phenomenon was well-known to the engineers of the day. As a judicious producer, Jimmy Page took advantage of it by integrating it into the final result, thereby rendering the effect intentional. John Paul Jones puts it somewhat differently: "Robert did some guide vocals in the studio and we couldn't get rid of them, so we turned them into an effect."[7]

One of the peculiarities of *Led Zeppelin I* is that it was mixed directly in stereo, a practice that was relatively new in 1968, when mono mixing was still the norm. The result was astonishing, as Glyn Johns explains: "The stereo mix of this record is certainly one of the best sounding that I ever made, but the credit has to go to the band, as all I did was try to faithfully put down on tape what they were giving me, adding a little echo here and there to enhance the mood."[14]

At the time, Glyn Johns asked for a production credit, which apparently went down like a lead balloon with Jimmy Page: "I said, 'No way. I put this band together, I brought them in and directed the whole recording process, I got my own guitar sound—I'll tell you, you haven't got a hope in hell.'"[9] Following this incident, Jimmy took the decision never again to avail himself of Glyn's talents. But this didn't stop him from hiring Glyn's brother Andy for the next album.

Recording Bonham

A certain family resemblance can indeed be detected in the exceptional quality with which John Bonham's drums are recorded. Jimmy Page explains that during his years as a session musician, he had all too often experienced poor drum recording, despite the best efforts of the drummers, notably the excellent Bobby Graham. He came to understand that the instrument needed to be given space, that the sound should be captured from a certain distance: "So when I recorded Zeppelin, particularly John Bonham, I simply moved the mikes away to get some ambient sound."[9]

For his part, Glyn Johns inadvertently widened the sonic image of the drums by recording them in stereo. After recording a base track (bass/drums/guitar) and while getting ready to do an acoustic guitar overdub, he took one of the Neumann U67 mics that he had been using for the drums and recorded the guitar with it. When he finished, he returned the mic to its original place for the next recording. But there was a surprise when he returned to the mixing desk: "When I lifted the faders to listen to the drums, I found that I had inadvertently left the mic assigned to the track I had been using for the overdub, which I had placed to the far left of the stereo. As the other drum mic was in the middle, it spread the sound to the left. So I wondered what would happen if I put them left and right, and made the small adjustment of pointing the floor tom-tom mic at the snare, making the two mics equidistant from it. The result sounded enormous, with the completely different perspective that stereo brings."[14] Finally, in order to prevent the drums from occupying the entire stereo field, Johns panned back each track to half left and half right. And that is what he has been doing ever since!

Led Zeppelin would use only a limited number of external musicians over the course of their career. For "Black Mountain Side" on *Led Zeppelin I*, however, Jimmy Page called in the talented tabla player Viram Jasani.

Technical Details

When Led Zeppelin entered Olympic Studios, which had relocated to Barnes at the end of 1966, Studio One, where the group mostly recorded, had a mixing console designed by the brilliant Dick Swettenham with sixteen input and four output channels. The tape recorder was probably a four-track Ampex AG330. The monitors were four Tannoy Silver loudspeakers mounted in Lockwood cabinets. Among the studio's various effects, it is worth mentioning the remarkable EMT 140 plate reverb, the benchmark in those days. The studio also had a very well-stocked mic cabinet, Glyn Johns favoring the Neumann U67 and U47 and the Telefunken 251. Finally, it should be noted that Studio One (Olympic had three) also impressed with its size: 62 feet by 43 feet (19 meters by 13 meters) with a ceiling height of 28 feet (8.5 meters)!

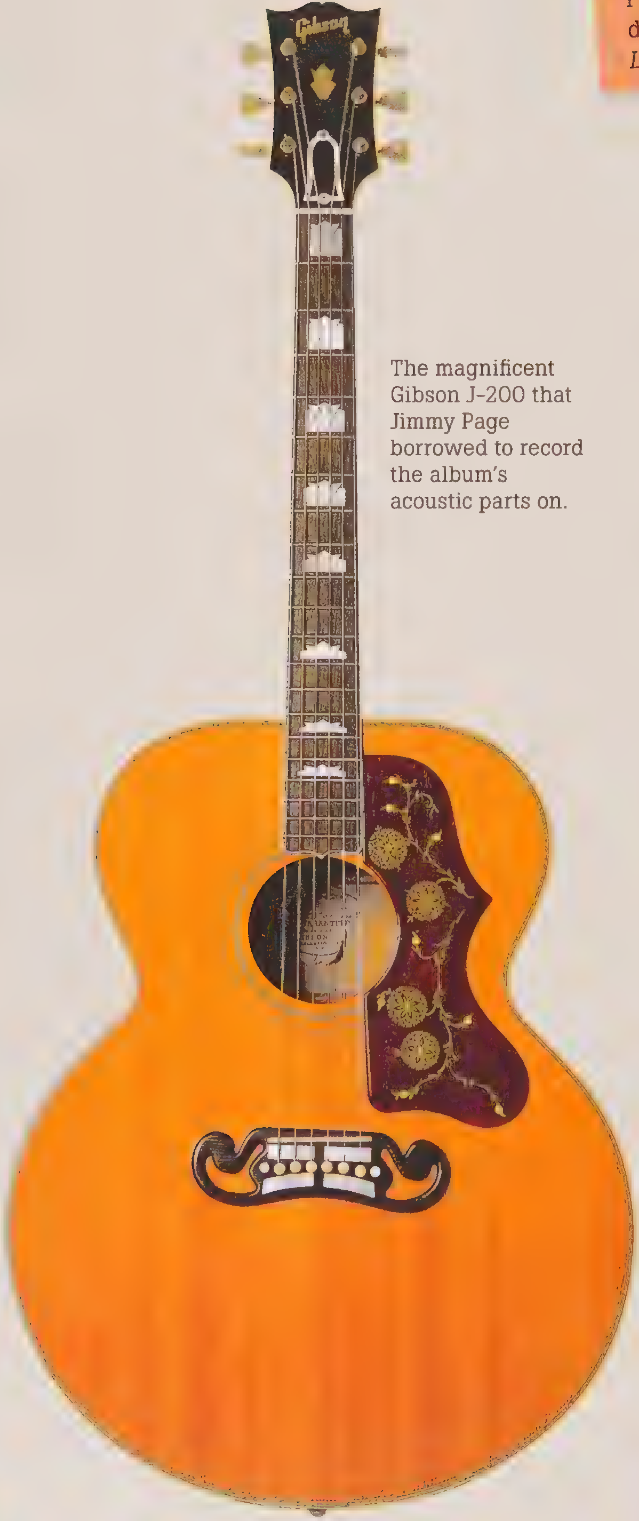
The Instruments

Jimmy Page recorded most of the tracks on the album using his 1959 Fender Telecaster given to him by Jeff Beck in 1966 (originally purchased by the guitarist John Owen in 1961). This guitar, which he had used a great deal with the Yardbirds, initially had a white pickguard. At the beginning of 1967, taking his cue from Pink Floyd's Syd Barrett, Jimmy Page adorned the body of the instrument with eight reflective discs. Before long, he removed them and instead decorated the guitar with a dragon design he painted himself, hence its nickname "Dragon Tele." He almost never used the instrument after this, however, other than for the extraordinary solo on "Stairway to Heaven." It should be pointed out that this Telecaster was to suffer an affront that would render it totally unusable. While Page was on tour with his 1959 Gibson Les Paul, one of his friends (probably completely stoned!) prepared a nice surprise for him by totally repainting the Telecaster, destroying the dragon in the process. "He thought he had done me a favor. As you can guess, I was *real* happy about that. His paint job totally screwed up the sound and the wiring, so only the neck pickup worked."[9] Following restoration, he reused the neck on his brown Telecaster (fitted with a StringBender), but has never again used the body of the instrument, despite suggesting in 2014 that he might one day.

Page also reveals that he used another guitar on the album: "It's hard for people to believe, but I just used my

Jimmy Page bowing his legendary Dragon Telecaster (which he painted himself) in Denmark on March 17.

According to certain reports, Robert Plant now possesses the Slingerland drum kit thought to have been used on *Led Zeppelin I* by John Bonham.



The magnificent Gibson J-200 that Jimmy Page borrowed to record the album's acoustic parts on.

Fender Telecaster for the entire album, except for one track […].” Someone was trying to sell him a Gibson Flying V in which he was not particularly interested, but he agreed to give it a go. “I brought it into Olympic and used it on ‘You Shook Me,’”[15] he explains.

He can also be heard using a Fender 800 pedal steel guitar, a first for Page. And for the acoustic sections he plays a superb Gibson J-200 flat top borrowed from an old friend: “The J-200 used on *Led Zeppelin I* belonged to Mickie Most, the producer of the Yardbirds, and it was an amazing-sounding instrument.”[15] Some sources claim the lender was Big Jim Sullivan, a colleague and friend when they were both session musicians, but according to Page, this was not the case. He would also tell Brad Tolinski in an interview in Tolinski's excellent book *Light & Shade: Conversations with Jimmy Page* that he recorded for this first album with a Harmony acoustic, presumably the Harmony Sovereign H1260 he had been using before Led Zeppelin, but this is probably an error on Page's part.

As for effects, he uses a Fuzz Tone Bender pedal (presumably the Tone Bender Professional MKII), a JMI Vox Grey wah-wah, and, for delay, a Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo, the “Long Tom.” It is interesting to note that he used to make various modifications to his Tone Bender in order to obtain more sustain and harmonics. Similarly, he wired his Telecaster's two pickups together in order to achieve a different sound. The Leslie speaker of John Paul Jones's Hammond organ also provided him with an interesting color for some of his solos. However, the effect with which Jimmy Page is most closely associated, both visually and sonically, is his violin bow, which he had been using since the Yardbirds. This was a regular bow tightened a little more than for a violin, and generously rosined. In terms of amplification, he later described using “a hodgepodge of amps—Vox and Hiwatts, mostly.”[9] However, as he would confirm to Steve Rosen in the columns of *Guitar Player* in 1977, the main amp

he selected for the sessions was a Supro combo with a single 12-inch speaker (1624T Dual Tone).

John Paul Jones plays a Fender Jazz Bass he bought at the end of 1962, which would stay with him through most of the group's albums. He would later claim that in the studio he preferred to be plugged directly into the console, with a mic on his amp as well. But which amplifier? The question remains unresolved, John Paul having almost certainly plugged into whatever amp was to be found at Olympic Studios. It is, of course, possible that he plays through the Ampeg B-15 combo he previously used for his session work.

As an accomplished musician, John Paul Jones also takes care of the various keyboard parts, using his own Hammond M-100 organ with a Leslie 122 speaker, as well as an electric piano, the Hohner Electra-piano.

Although he switched to a Ludwig kit for the second album, John Bonham likely uses a Slingerland, the same one he took with him on the Scandinavian tour that preceded the Olympic sessions, for the first. Apparently, this kit did not belong to him, but was either leased or had been used on the Yardbirds tours. It seems to have had a 14x22-inch bass drum and 9x13 and 16x16 toms. Despite his enormous power, Bonham played a pretty simple kit: bass drum, snare drum, floor tom, middle tom. Slingerland was a brand often associated with jazz drummers such as Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich.

Finally, Robert Plant delivers some very good harmonica parts, most likely on a Hohner Echo Super Vamper—the famous Marine Band not becoming available in Europe until the mid-seventies.

Earlier on in his career, Peter Grant had been a bouncer, a wrestler, and a television and movie extra—experience that served him in good stead for his role as manager of Led Zeppelin.

PETER GRANT, THE BATTERSEA GIANT

A force of nature with a beard that devoured half his face, a penetrating gaze, a bluntness mitigated by a certain way with words, and, most of all, an unshakable faith in the future of those in his care, Peter Grant will be remembered as one of the most important managers in the history of rock. A Rabelaisian or Shakespearean figure, Grant's contribution to Led Zeppelin's worldwide success is almost as integral as the musicians themselves, and comparable to that of Andrew Loog Oldham at the start of the Rolling Stones' career or to Brian Epstein's importance to the Beatles'.

Born in the south London suburb of South Norwood on April 5, 1935, Peter Grant was the son of Dorothy Louise Grant, a secretary. He never knew his father. Evacuated during the Second World War, he was eventually reunited with his mother and they lived in a small flat in Battersea during the second half of the forties. At the tender age of thirteen, Peter left school to work in a sheet metal factory in Croydon. He survived for only five short weeks. After that he got a job as a stagehand at the Croydon Empire Theatre and then as a waiter at a Soho restaurant before being taken on as a runner for Reuters news agency on Fleet Street.

In 1953, Peter Grant was called up for two years in the National Service, not the happiest time of his life. Upon returning to civilian life, he got a job in a resort following which he worked as a doorman and bouncer at 2i's, a coffee bar at 59 Old Compton Street that was soon to play a key role in the explosion of rock music in the United Kingdom. In the meantime, Peter Grant made the acquaintance of Mickie Most at the coffee bar. "I had known Mickie Most since 1957," he would later divulge. "We used to work together at the 2Is. Mickie poured the coffee while I sold the tickets at the top of the stairs."[7]

"The Masked Marauder"

Paul Lincoln, the owner of 2i's, was a wrestler in his spare time. He took the young Peter Grant (6.5 feet, 287 pounds [1.96 meters, 130 kilograms]) along to watch and then, under outlandish pseudonyms such as "His Highness Count Bruno Alassio of Milan" or "The Masked Marauder," into the ring. From wrestling to the movies was but one short step, which Grant took at the start of the sixties as Anthony Quinn's body double in *The Guns of Navarone* (1961), directed by J. Lee Thompson (1961), but also as a bit player in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra* (1963), several episodes of the television series *The Saint*, and even *The Benny Hill Show*. The fees may not have been especially high, but they did enable him to purchase two minibuses. This was another step forward. He started driving for the notorious concert promoter Don Arden, and then became tour manager in the United Kingdom for American stars such as the Everly Brothers, Little Richard, Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, and Gene Vincent. In short, rock 'n' roll entered his life.

During the early sixties, while organizing tours for Gene Vincent, Peter Grant once again crossed the path of Mickie Most, who, after forming a pop group in South Africa with his wife Christina, had returned to England, this time as a producer. It was Most who discovered the Animals in a club in Newcastle upon Tyne and produced their first singles, "Baby Let Me Take You Home" and, more importantly, "The House of the Rising Sun," which topped the charts in the United Kingdom and the United

States in 1964. He was also behind the enormous success of Herman's Hermits and numbers like "I'm into Something Good" (1964) and "No Milk Today" (1966), which he produced and took to numbers 1 and 7, respectively, in the United Kingdom.

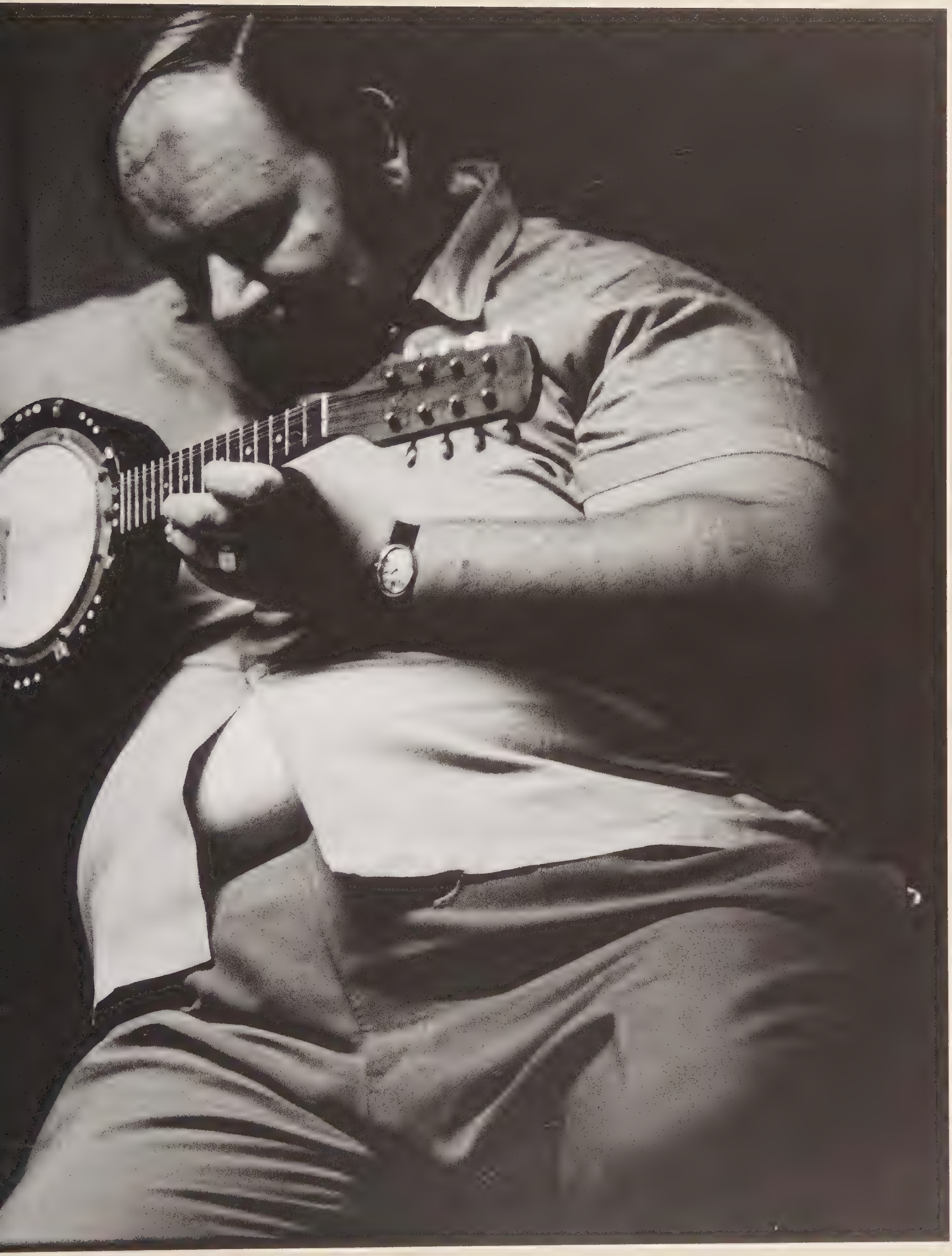
155 Oxford Street

Most and Grant became affiliated and opened offices on the second floor at 155 Oxford Street (headquarters of the future RAK Management). After acting as tour manager for the Animals, Grant made his management debut proper with the Nashville Teens, a Surrey band that made it into the UK top ten with "Tobacco Road." He also presided over the fortunes of the all-female band She Trinity, the New Vaudeville Band—which in turn entered the UK charts with "Winchester Cathedral" (number 4 in September 1966)—Terry Reid, and even Donovan. In short, the dynamism and prosperity of their undertaking lived up to the expectations of Most and Grant, who then hired Richard Cole—another important figure in Led Zeppelin's future rise to glory. An indication of the financial success of the management company was Grant's 1966 acquisition of Simon Napier-Bell's shares in the Yardbirds, whom he also took over as manager. "I had known Jimmy Page for some while when I took on The Yardbirds," he explains. "He'd done loads of session work over the years and had become involved with the band only just before I was approached to take over their management. What happened was that Simon Napier-Bell wanted to offload the band, because he was keen to become a film producer. So I took them, along with Jeff Beck."[7]

Captain Grant and His Charges

When the Yardbirds split up, in summer 1968, Peter Grant and Jimmy Page threw themselves into the New Yardbirds, which became Led Zeppelin after they returned from their Scandinavian tour in September 1968. Grant's job was to manage the band. That is what his job remained, and that is what the four members of the group appreciated. "Peter didn't interfere at all," explains John Paul Jones. "He had no say about the music. We always thought he deserved to be called 'executive producer' of the albums, because he'd cleared a space for us to do what we liked."[7]

John Paul Jones with Led Zeppelin's highly imposing manager, Peter Grant.



Opposite: Peter Grant, an indomitable manager who made it possible for Led Zeppelin to climb a stairway to heaven.

In the mid-sixties, producer Mickie Most teamed up with Peter Grant to write a new chapter in the history of rock 'n' roll.

One of Most's discoveries, the Animals, whose worldwide hit "The *House of the Rising Sun*" he produced.

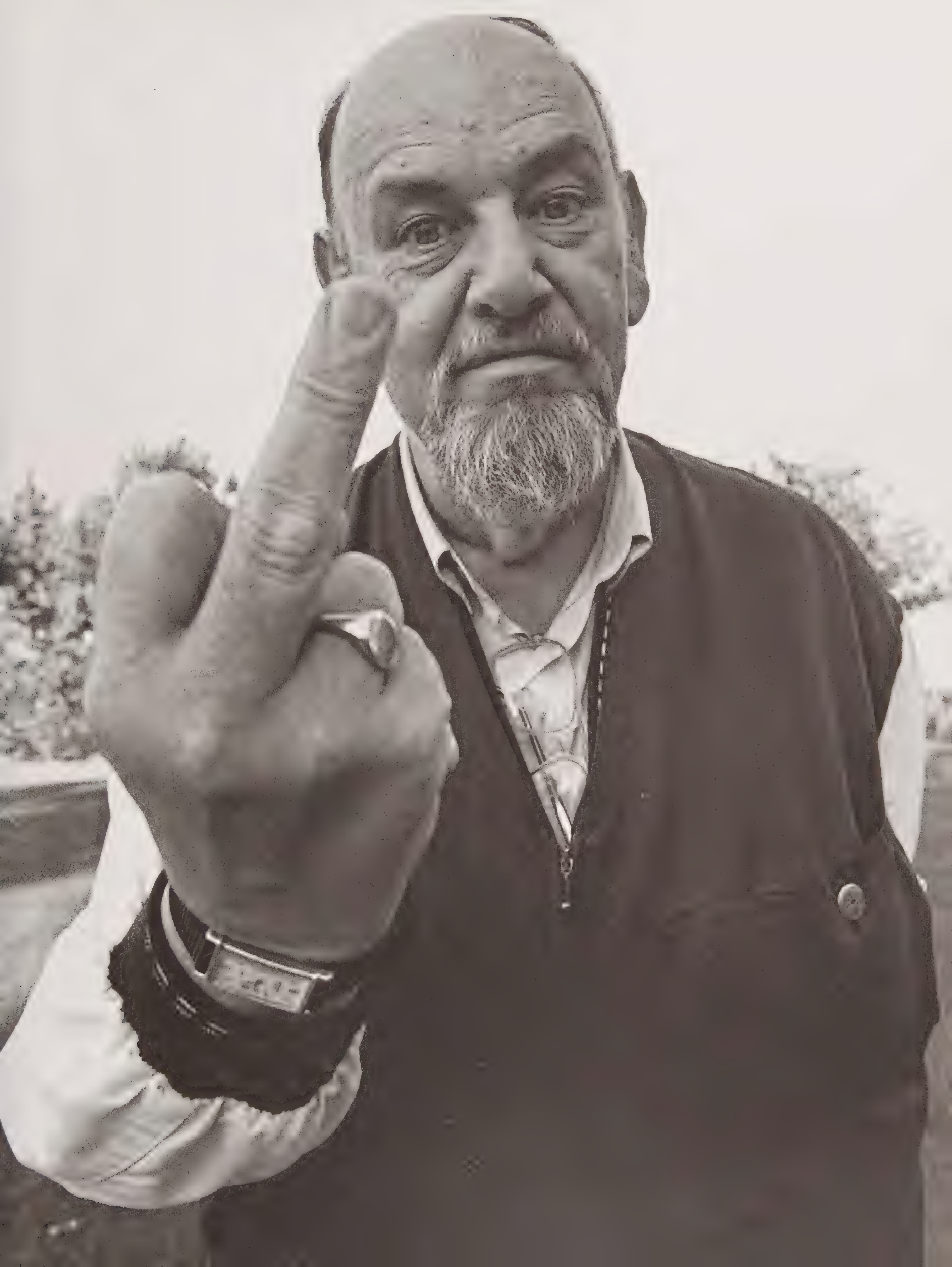
Peter Grant was no less essential for that, not least in getting Led Zeppelin signed to Atlantic at the very outset, and then organizing tours throughout the entire world, liaising between the four musicians and the media, protecting them as best he could from the ruthlessness of the star system, and, most importantly, looking after their financial interests (waging a merciless war on bootlegging, for example)—and all of this without a contract ever being signed between the manager and the group. From 1974 to 1983, Peter Grant was also the president of Swan Song Records, the label founded by Led Zeppelin, which, in addition to the group's albums, would also release records by Bad Company, Maggie Bell, the Pretty Things, and Dave Edmunds.

An Honest Soul

Peter Grant was every inch the rock manager, with all the excesses: alcohol, cocaine, excess weight, diabetes… On top of all this, personal difficulties and an infinite sadness at the death of John Bonham (on September 25, 1980) wore him down, and his health gradually declined. In 1983, while curing himself of his addictions, he quit the music scene and entered well-earned retirement at his manor house at Hellingly, East Sussex, before moving to nearby Eastbourne. In 1992 he agreed to play the cardinal in Gerald Thomas's movie *Carry On Columbus* and started to give talks on his life's work, on his vocation.

On the afternoon of November 21, 1995, while driving his car in the company of his son, Peter Grant suffered a fatal heart attack. A few months earlier, on July 26, he had made his last public appearance at the Wembley Arena concert of Jimmy Page and Robert Plant. His funeral was held on December 4, 1995, at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Hellingly, in the presence of Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, Jeff Beck; Paul Rodgers, Boz Burrell, and Simon Kirke of Bad Company; and Phil Carson (vice president of Atlantic from 1968 to 1985). The funeral oration was given by Lord Philip Gould, Baron Gould of Brookwood, a friend of Peter Grant (and Tony Blair). "He was proud of what he'd achieved in helping to revolutionize the music business. Some thought he had a reputation for being rude. Not really! He was just totally honest. With Peter there was no front, just an honest opinion."[7]

Peter Grant rests in peace in Hellingly Cemetery. He had been married to Gloria (they divorced in 1977) and was the father of three children, Warren, Amy, and Tiffany.



GOOD TIMES BAD TIMES

Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham / 2:43

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, vocal harmonies
Jimmy Page: guitars, backing vocals (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, backing vocals (?)
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 3, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

"Good Times, Bad Times" (with comma) is also the title of an acoustic blues ballad by the Rolling Stones. Written by Jagger and Richards, this is the B-side of their single "It's All Over Now," released in 1964. Other than the title there's no connection between the two songs.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

At the famous "Celebration Day" held at London's O2 Arena on December 10, 2007, "Good Times Bad Times" was the first song performed by Led Zeppelin, with Jason Bonham (John's son) on drums. Twenty million fans had applied over the Internet for tickets to this tribute concert for Ahmet Ertegun of Atlantic Records. Just twenty thousand were successful!

Genesis

Led Zeppelin launch their discographical journey with a chord from Jimmy Page on electric guitar, and within seconds the machine is running hot. The chord also announces the quartet's mission: to write an explosive new chapter in the history of rock, continuing the work begun by Cream between 1966 and 1968.

"Good Times Bad Times" (initially called "A Man I Know") was composed shortly before the start of the sessions for the group's first album, around the time the Yardbirds became the New Yardbirds. It is believed they may even have played it live a couple of times, along with "Your Time Is Gonna Come." However, other than the intro, which can be heard being performed at the Olympia in Paris, but on this occasion attached to "Communication Breakdown" (recorded on October 10, 1969, and released on the deluxe edition of the album in 2014), there is no live recording of the song. What is certain is that it is the fruit of a collaboration among Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham. "John Paul Jones came up with the riff," explains Jimmy Page. "I had the chorus. John Bonham applied the bass-drum pattern. That one really shaped our writing process. It was like, 'Wow, everybody's erupting at once.'"[16]

The lyrics evoke the passing of time. The protagonist of the song remembers his past. *I tried to do all those things the best I can*, sings Robert Plant in the first verse. But he's forced to admit that there have been many dark periods—his woman left him *for a brown-eyed man* and well before that, when he was sixteen, *it only took a couple of days* for his girlfriend to be *rid of* him. Bleak and lonely times, in other words…

This opening track on the first LP remained on Led Zeppelin's set lists until 1970. It was released as a single in the United States on March 10, 1969, with "Communication Breakdown" as the B-side.

From the very first track on the band's very first album, John Bonham gives a display of phenomenal groove and power. He and John Paul Jones formed one of the most awesome rhythm sections in rock music.

Left: The Godsmack singer and guitarist, who incorporated "Good Times Bad Times" into the repertoire of the American heavy-metal band.

Opposite: Carmine Appice, the drummer of Vanilla Fudge in the sixties, was blown away by the bass drum work of his future friend John Bonham.

COVER

The Massachusetts heavy metal band Godsmack include a highly successful version of "Good Times Bad Times" on their album *Good Times, Bad Times...Ten Years of Godsmack* (2007).

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

In case you're wondering what exactly are those much-discussed triplets played by John Bonham on his bass drum, a good example can be found at precisely 0:30.

Production

It is impossible to write about "Good Times Bad Times" without emphasizing John Bonham's mind-blowing drums. With the group's very first outing on disc, he achieves a remarkable feat: not only does he lay down a sensational groove from the first few bars but also he distinguishes himself by executing triplets of fearsome technical difficulty on his bass drum! Jimmy Page is tireless in his praise of Bonham: "The most stunning thing about that track, of course, is Bonzo's amazing kick drum. It's superhuman when you realize he was not playing with a double kick. That's one kick drum! That's when people started understanding what he was all about."[9] And the technique did not go unnoticed by Carmine Appice, the drummer of Vanilla Fudge, for whom Led Zeppelin opened during their first North American tour (at the beginning of 1969). Listening to "Good Times Bad Times," Appice congratulated the performer of the stunning triplet. But Bonzo pointed out that it was from the Vanilla Fudge drummer that he had got it in the first place. Surprised and uncomprehending, Appice assured Bonham that he had never played a rhythmic figure like that. "He proceeded to tell me where I did actually do that on the first Vanilla Fudge record,"[17] on "Ticket to Ride," the Beatles cover that opens the album *Vanilla Fudge* (1967). What Bonham never suspected is that Appice played his triplet not only with his foot but with a little help from his sticks too!

In addition to the bass drum, Bonham also plays an excellent cowbell, which he subtly brings into dialogue with his hi-hat, lending the rhythm an explosive pulse and an incomparable groove. This opening track can be seen as one of the best of all displays of his technique and talent, as a kind of calling card, perhaps.

And what better support to have than John Paul Jones? The bass playing of the former arranger and session musician is nothing short of brilliant. Jones simultaneously supports the riff, follows the bass drum like a shadow, delivers a number of solo phrases, and provides a certain R&B color that is reminiscent of Motown, one of his major influences. The sonority of his Jazz Bass is both rounded and powerful. Does he combine plugging directly into the console with a mic on the amp, as he has suggested? One way or the other, the results are striking, and together, Jones and Bonzo form one of the most effective rhythm sections in the history of rock. The bassist, however, was not confined to his instrument but also contributed to the songwriting. "I remember there was a

PAiSTe
Ludwig

Hammond organ in the studio, which I used and I wrote the riff to 'Good Times Bad Times.'"[7] Nevertheless, Carmine Appice has said he seems to remember being told "by a member of the band that the 'Good Times Bad Times' riff came from Tim Bogert's bass line"[17] (Tim Bogert being the Vanilla Fudge bassist).

Jimmy Page opens the track on his 1959 Telecaster accompanied by bass and drums. He produces a rock sound with fuzz courtesy of the Tone Bender and is amplified most likely through the Supro combo. The opening power chords lead into the riff, which is extremely guitaristic despite having been composed on the organ. The organ also doubles the guitar in order to reinforce the sound. At 1:30, Page plays a twenty-second solo that recalls some of his contributions as a Yardbird. "I'm using a Leslie on the solo on 'Good Times Bad Times,'"[18] he explained in 1977. This cabinet fitted with a rotating loudspeaker system is generally used to amplify Hammond organs. But Page takes the studio Leslie and uses it to color his Telecaster. His phrases are radiant and punchy with numerous string bends, while his licks are inspired by the blues. This solo takes the form of a veritable adrenaline rush and is all the more effective as he has Jones and Bonham laying down the ideal rhythmic basis for him. Finally, in the coda, he fires off a series of short phrases that answer Plant's vocals. He would later regret one or two of these. "There's not too much wrong with it, apart from a couple of dodgy guitar phrases at the end."[15] Possibly the ones that can be heard between 2:28 and 2:32…

Finally, it was through "Good Times Bad Times" that the vast majority of listeners discovered Robert Plant's voice for the very first time. Page would never tire of showering praise on him: "Robert was absolutely extraordinary in those days. He was so bombastic and fearless that neither the songs nor the studio intimidated him. He very quickly got to a point where no other singer could touch him."[15] It is certainly true that from his very first bars his voice immediately commands attention. High-pitched, with incredible energy and distinctly blues phrasing, his voice can almost be said to have established the vocal canon of the hard rock or heavy metal bands of the future all by itself. It is worth noting that Plant harmonizes with himself in the verses and doubles himself an octave higher in the refrains, where he also seems to be joined by vocals from his bandmates.

The queen of folk, Joan Baez, had performed Anne Bredon's "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" in 1962, several years before Led Zeppelin.

BABE I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU

Anne Bredon, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:40

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic and electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: September 27 and October 3, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At 1:41 a phantom voice can be heard in the background (*I can hear it calling me*). This is Robert Plant's, having been either caught by another instrument's microphone ("bleeding") during the previous take or else copied onto other tracks by means of a phenomenon known as "magnetic echo." The same effect can be heard more softly at 5:54, this time with the guitars rather than the voice.

Genesis

There is a curious story behind this cover. "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," a folk song in spirit, was recorded in 1962 by Joan Baez (on the album *In Concert*) after she had heard it sung by Janet Smith, a student of Oberlin College. Smith had previously been a fellow student at University of California, Berkeley, of Anne Bredon, the real author and composer of the song. Ignorant of this, Joan Baez and her record company Vanguard merely described the song in the album credits as "traditional." *Led Zeppelin I* does not go a lot further, stating, "Traditional, arranged by Jimmy Page." This remained unchanged for twenty years until Anne Bredon, alerted by Janet Smith, who had heard the Led Zep version by chance, got in touch with the four musicians and the senior management of Atlantic. The record company then rectified the issue by adding her name to the credits.

In an interview with Daniel Rachel, Jimmy Page explains how he developed the Led Zeppelin version of "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You": "I worked out this arrangement using a more finger-style method and then having a flamenco burst in it. Again, it's light and shade and this drama of accents."[19] "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" also reveals the close connection between Jimmy Page and Robert Plant: "We had an empathy. 'Babe I'm Gonna Leave You,' I knew exactly how that was going to shape up. I set the mood with the acoustic guitar and that flamenco-like section. But Robert embraced it. He came up with an incredible, plaintive vocal. When you're in a group, you're trying to bring out the best of each member, in that moment. We managed to bring something good out of each other."[16]

The lyrics describe a breakup. Robert Plant plays the part of a man who remains fond of his lover. (*I know I never gonna leave you babe*, he sings in the fourth verse, and he repeats *babe* or *baby* almost thirty times.) All the same, he has to go. The lure of adventure has become irresistible…

Robert Plant reveals his talent as a folk-rock singer in "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" and would give repeated demonstrations of this gift throughout the seventies.

In 1968, Jimmy Page recorded a version of "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" with Steve Winwood. The disc has never been released.

Production

Clearly, anyone looking to compare Joan Baez's version with Led Zeppelin's will be at something of a loss… Jimmy Page explains: "The reason they are different is because we were able to fuse her acoustic approach with heavy guitars, which was something that hadn't been done."[15] The English group's version is richer harmonically, with numerous variations that enable them to make the number their own and transform it pretty well into a new song. Hence the justification for Page and Plant being credited with the arrangements. The Baez version has obvious charm, with a gentleness and a ballad-like feel that are typically folk. Led Zeppelin's, by contrast, is dark-hued, raging, bewitching, theatrical.

It is Jimmy Page who opens the proceedings, with an arpeggiated passage that, by his own definition, is "a cross between fingerstyle and flatpicking,"[18] in other words combining fingers and pick. He is playing the Gibson J-200 he borrowed from Mickie Most, the producer of the Yardbirds (not from Big Jim Sullivan, as is often claimed). "He graciously let me use it for the first album but didn't let me use it for the second album, because, I think, by then he knew he wasn't going to be the producer. [*laughs*]"[15] The guitar is positioned on the right with superb reverb from the EMT 140 plate, which is in stereo and resonates particularly well in the left-hand channel. A second acoustic part is overdubbed on the opposite side of the stereo image, doubling both the arpeggiated and the strummed parts. Page also uses this guitar to add some very good phrases in a more or less flamenco style, but at the same time with a good blues flavor in the well-judged bends (listen around 4:51). He does not come in on his Telecaster until 2:23, when the Tone Bender fuzz creates more of a hard-rock than a blues feel. He only plays solo on it (with bottleneck) for a few bars from 4:10, with ample reverb, but uses it for the rapid slides that can be heard at the end of the track. Finally, it is worth highlighting a slide phrase he plays during the instrumental bridge, which he uses to create a highly dramatic atmosphere (at 2:08). Wide panning from left to right reinforces this effect.

Robert Plant gives an excellent interpretation of this text written by the folk singer Anne Bredon, offering a simultaneously grandiloquent and bluesy rereading of it. His voice commands the listener's attention with its powerful swoops, taking it close to the breaking point, and perfect control in alternating between melancholy and angry moods. John Paul Jones would corroborate this in April 1970: "Robert is unique. […] Robert is really something. I couldn't imagine any other singer with us. I just couldn't."[20] On this track Plant also employs for the first time a vocal gimmick he would make his own, repeating the same word (in this instance *baby*) several times in a row. Finally, from 5:13 he can be heard holding on to a single note (not always perfectly in tune!) in order to harmonize with the instrumental arrangement.

John Paul Jones is worthy of nothing but praise for his superb bass line, whose entry is delayed for forty-three seconds into the track. His sound is soft and velvety and accompanies Page's acoustic guitar with considerable subtlety. During a particularly tender moment in the second verse, he even seems to play four harmonics (from 1:27). During the harder rock sections, he displays an efficient sense of rhythm that is in perfect symbiosis with Bonham's drums.

Although the latter plays on relatively little of the track, his interventions are always subtle (for example the toms in the instrumental breaks at the end of the verses) and powerful (his inordinate use of crash cymbals in the rock parts).

"Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" is a surprising choice of cover that helps to give a more rounded picture of the group's potential, Led Zeppelin having been in existence for only a few months at the beginning of autumn 1968.

BOBBY
AND THE
HELMETS

YOU SHOOK ME

Willie Dixon, J. B. Lenoir / 6:30

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, organ, electric piano
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: September 27, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

Genesis

"You Shook Me" has its origins in "Blue Guitar," an instrumental recorded in May 1961 at Chess studios by the guitarist Earl Hooker, accompanied by A. C. Reed (tenor sax), "Big Moose" Walker (organ), Lafayette Leake (piano), Ernest Johnson (bass), and Bobby Little (drums). Won over by the record and keen, at the beginning of the nineteen sixties, to relaunch the career of Muddy Waters, Leonard Chess reached an agreement with Earl Hooker and led the father of modern blues back into the studio. All Waters had to do was sing the words, freshly written by Willie Dixon and J. B. Lenoir, onto the recording. The disc was released in 1962.

The scenario is that of a boyfriend (or husband) deserted by a straying lover (or wife). The jilted man is devastated and begs her: *Baby, baby, please come home*. And in order to make her understand that he is not without certain qualities, he resorts to a metaphor much used in the blues: *I have a bird that whistles/And I have birds that sing…*

Earl Hooker's recording of "Blue Guitar" was released in 1961 on the label Age Records, a subsidiary of Mel London's Chief Records.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The Jeff Beck Group had already recorded a cover of "You Shook Me" during the *Truth* sessions in May 1968, resulting in accusations of Jimmy Page stealing other people's ideas. In his book *Hammer of the Gods*, Stephen Davis writes that when Beck heard the demo, "His heart sank," adding that "the tears were coming out with anger."[3] For his part, Jimmy Page has claimed not to have known about Jeff Beck's recording until the release of *Truth*. This is difficult to believe, given that John Paul Jones plays keyboards on Beck's version.

In 1999, Jimmy Page performed "You Shook Me" with the Black Crowes at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles.

Production

It is on a Gibson Flying V that Jimmy Page launches "You Shook Me." The guitar has a harsh, raw, saturated (courtesy of the Tone Bender) sound that is perfect for the blues, and this was to be the one and only time on the whole album that Jimmy is unfaithful (on electric at least) to his Telecaster. Even so, he did not particularly want to play it. The vendor was keen to sell it to him, and in the end he agreed to give it a try: "With those big humbuckers [guitar pickups], it was so powerful you can hear it breaking up the amp in the middle of the song. I could've tidied it up, but I really liked hearing the amp really struggle to get the sound out."[15] He plays bottleneck with plenty of reverb, and is joined before long by the rest of the group, including Robert Plant, who gives some excellent harmonica, almost certainly a Hohner Echo Super Vamper, with wonderful phrasing. As soon

The Jeff Beck Group also recorded a version of "You Shook Me." Left to right: Rod Stewart, Ron Wood, Micky Waller, and Jeff Beck.

as he launches into the vocal line, Plant is joined by Page on the Gibson, doubling, in unison, the singer's every other phrase with a highly effective glissando effect. Plant's voice can be heard reaching up for the highest notes like a ferocious wailing.

The rhythm section is sluggish, stretching out the beat to the max and creating an impression of instability and tension that is in perfect keeping with the lyrics. As well as delivering a solid bass line on his Jazz Bass, John Paul Jones overdubs a very good electric piano part (on the Hohner Electra-piano), which can be heard on the left of the stereo field.

Everyone in turn except Bonham takes a solo. John Paul Jones goes first (starting at 2:08), switching to his Hammond M-100 organ. Contrary to his usual practice, he exchanges the Leslie speaker for the keyboard's internal vibrato/chorus, with which he achieves a similar effect. His soul-drenched playing recalls that of Jimmy Smith and Ray Charles. Jones would later announce that "organ, in fact, was always my first love, but for session playing I found it much easier to carry a bass guitar to work than a Hammond organ!"[21] Robert Plant then takes over on the harmonica. The sound he draws from it marks him out as a master of the instrument, with a

J. B. Lenoir (left), accompanied on double bass by the strapping Willie Dixon and others.

technique most likely polished during the short time he spent with Alexis Korner just before Page came to audition him. Although he has often cited Sonny Boy Williamson as one of his influences, what comes across here is more that of the brilliant harmonica player Sonny Terry, who liked to mix more or less sung vocalizations into his solos, something Plant also does (listen at around 3:37). Finally, Jimmy Page brings the round of solos to a close with an excellent and highly spirited solo on his Gibson Flying V, colored by strong delay from his Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo. The group can be seen lip-synching the song on German television on the edition of *Beat Club* from March 27, 1969. During the second break of the guitar solo, at 4:25, John Bonham can be observed launching into a relatively complicated rhythmic figure with a single stick while executing a highly adept helicopter roll with the other (in his right hand)!

In the last part of the track, Jimmy Page wanted to use a particular effect: "Later, when we recorded 'You Shook Me,' I told the engineer, Glyn Johns, that I wanted to use backwards echo on the end. He said, 'Jimmy, it can't be done.' I said 'Yes, it can. I've already done it.' [...]"[9] And Page proceeded to explain how to turn the tape around, record the reverb from the sound source in question on a free track, put the tape back to the right place, and listen to the same reverb, which is reversed as a result. This is exactly what Page had done on the Yardbirds' "Ten Little Indians" in 1967. Glyn Johns complied, with evident bad grace, and refused to bring the potentiometer up to listen to the results. "Finally, I had to scream, 'Push the bloody fader up!'"[9] The resulting effect is perfect. "When Glyn heard the result, he looked bloody ill."[9] This backward echo can be heard at the end of the song, starting at 5:38 and continuing throughout the voice/guitar duel between Plant and Page that serves to highlight the Led Zeppelin singer's extraordinary vocal skills—including the ability to reach ultra-shrill notes with apparent ease.

A bluesman from the state of Mississippi, J. B. Lenoir co-wrote the words—in partnership with Willie Dixon—to Earl Hooker's blues "You Shook Me," which Muddy Waters subsequently recorded.

J.B. LENOIR

J. B. Lenoir is credited as co-author alongside Willie Dixon of "You Shook Me," but never recorded the song. Born in Monticello, Mississippi, on March 5, 1929, and living in Chicago by the end of the forties, J. B. Lenoir became an important figure in African American music, combining urban blues with big band swing. He is also remembered as a politically committed musician, opposing Eisenhower's economic policy and US involvement in Korea and subsequently Vietnam—as testified by his "Eisenhower Blues," "Korea Blues," and "Vietnam Blues." Lenoir died on April 29, 1967.

There can be no doubt that Led Zeppelin have taken liberties with the original version. Where Muddy Waters's is traditional and serene, the English band's is harder edged, more "British," but also more tense and anguished, and less predictable in terms of its structure. However, Jimmy Page and his men need in no way hang their heads in shame before their illustrious elder.

🎧 IN YOUR HEADPHONES

Led Zeppelin seem to have enjoyed performing "You Shook Me." The highly suggestive words never failed to amuse them, as indicated by the laughter that bursts out at 1:46 at the end of the phrase *and I have birds that sing.*

The songwriter Jake Holmes. After hearing Holmes sing "Dazed and Confused" at the Village Theater, Jimmy Page decided to record the song for Led Zeppelin's second album.

DAZED AND CONFUSED

Jimmy Page, inspired by Jake Holmes / 6:27

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars, bow
John Paul Jones: bass, organ
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 3, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Dazed and Confused" has given its name to a movie by Richard Linklater, starring Matthew McConaughey, Ben Affleck, and Milla Jovovich, which went into wide release in 1993. The screenplay centers on a party organized by high school students in celebration of summer vacation. The director asked Led Zeppelin to compose the soundtrack...Jimmy Page agreed but Robert Plant declined!

Genesis

During the course of their sixth US tour, the Yardbirds played two shows at the Village Theater in Greenwich Village (New York City) on August 25, 1967. A young singer-songwriter by the name of Jake Holmes was the opening act. Just that June he had released his first album, *"The Above Ground Sound" of Jake Holmes*, recorded with Teddy Irwin on electric guitar and Rick Randle on bass. The first track of the second side of the LP was the song "Dazed and Confused," in which the first person gives vent to his malaise. He feels *like a mouse* in the clutches of a cat; he feels he is being mistreated to the point where he would rather be dead. Is this the evocation of a bad LSD trip (nothing out of the ordinary during the height of the Summer of Love, when the counterculture was in full swing)? Not a bit of it, according to Holmes. The songwriter revealed to the press that he had never taken any hallucinogenic substances and that the subject of "Dazed and Confused" was a man mulling over the highly uncertain future of his relationship with his girlfriend.

What can be said is that the performance of this song onstage at the Village Theater made a deep impression on Jimmy Page, to the extent that the guitarist went and bought the album *"The Above Ground Sound" of Jake Holmes* after the concert. Keith Relf and Jim McCarty had also been seduced by the atmosphere of Holmes's song, by the confusion or even paranoia by which the protagonist's mind was beset, and, with Page, worked on new words and an electric arrangement. Thus it was that "Dazed and Confused" quickly entered the set list of the Yardbirds...then the New Yardbirds...and then Led Zeppelin.

The version of "Dazed and Confused" as played by Led Zeppelin live and recorded on their first album offers a very different vision of Jake Holmes's song. Firstly, the words have been changed. The uncertain feelings expressed in the first version have been replaced here by

In addition to co-writing the songs on Frank Sinatra's concept album *Watertown* (1970) with members of the Four Seasons, Jake Holmes also recorded a number of albums under his own name. In the United States, however, he was known primarily for his jingles for brands such as Chevrolet, Dr Pepper, NBC, and Gillette.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

From 2:04, and in particular at 2:15, the voice of Robert Plant can again be heard looming out of the depths. This is the same phenomenon of "bleeding" or "magnetic echo" as before (see "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You").

an out-and-out attack on women, or at least on a particular type of woman—those who despise their partners. *You hurt and abuse tellin' all of your lies…try to love you baby, but you push me away*: a bitter accusation indeed. Furthermore, the narrator, through the voice of Robert Plant, declares that *soul of a woman was created below, yeah*. What we have here is a vengeful, if not misogynistic, lyric that could almost have been written by the Rolling Stones. On a purely musical level, this song gives Jimmy Page an opportunity to rub shoulders with the sublime…

In January 1969, "Dazed and Confused" was released in the United States (two weeks before *Led Zeppelin I*) as the B-side of the single "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," but without achieving any success.

The history of this song does not end with the dawning of the seventies. In 2010, more than forty years after the release of *Led Zeppelin I*, Jake Holmes filed a lawsuit against Jimmy Page for plagiarism. This was settled out of court, with an "amicable" agreement apparently being reached between the two parties on January 17, 2012. What we do know is that the song credit has been changed to read "By Jimmy Page, inspired by Jake Holmes."

Production

Upon listening to Jake Holmes singing "Dazed and Confused," the same spirit and descending scale that characterize the Led Zeppelin version are immediately recognizable. Admittedly the earlier version is mainly acoustic, but even Holmes presents a very free structure with an intense instrumental section comprising a hypnotic guitar solo. The Yardbirds covered the song a little later, and their arrangement, and in particular the part of their guitarist Jimmy Page, bears considerable similarities to the version later cut by Led Zeppelin for their first album. This is confirmed by the Yardbirds' appearance on the edition of the French television show *Bouton*

It was during the recording of "Dazed and Confused" that Jimmy Page first resorted to a bow, which he is using here on his Dragon Telecaster, as a member of Led Zeppelin.

JIMMY PICKS UP THE BOW

It was in 1966, on one of his many recordings as a session musician, that Jimmy Page first used a bow on his guitar, then a Gibson "Black Beauty." The following year he would employ the effect again on the Yardbirds track "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor" (*Little Games*, 1967). The idea was not entirely new, however, and Eddie Phillips, who played guitar with the beat group the Creation, was already something of a specialist in bowing the electric guitar.

DAVID MCCALLUM ON VIOLIN

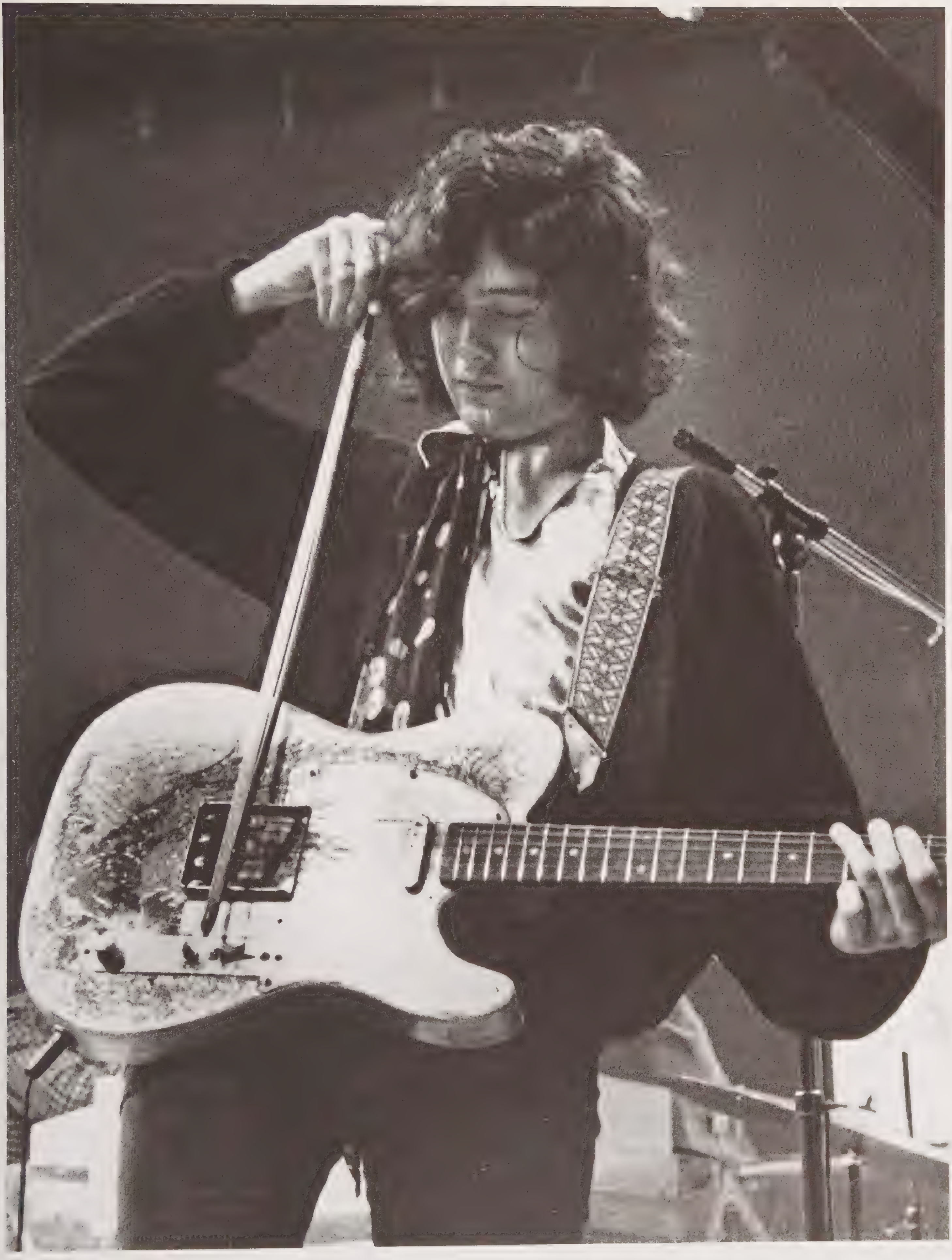
According to Page, it was the violinist David McCallum Sr. (father of the actor David McCallum, best known for his role in the television series *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*), who insisted that he try a bow on his guitar. David McCallum Sr. would later play the violin on the masterly sound collage on the Beatles' "A Day in the Life" (*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967).

Rouge from March 9, 1968, presented by Pierre Lattès. Here we have the same intro, the same riff, the same use of the bow, etc. This can also be ascertained from the album *Live Yardbirds: Featuring Jimmy Page*, released in August 1971, on which there is a version of "Dazed and Confused" simply called "I'm Confused."

Despite the striking similarities with the Yardbirds' version, Led Zeppelin nevertheless takes this incredible song to a new level and makes it their own. From the very first notes, John Paul Jones on his Jazz Bass and floating Telecaster, modulated with wah-wah and incredible reverb, creates a gripping atmosphere with Page. And with Robert Plant's entry, the difference between this and the Yardbirds' version is beyond dispute. With his unique, almost incomparable voice, certainly very different from that of Keith Relf, whose interpretation could be described as being on the restrained side, Plant immediately generates an acute tension. John Bonham reinforces the bass line with his bass drum before letting it rip at the end of the first verse on the descending riff that Jimmy Page doubles in stereo and reinforces with a third guitar positioned at the center of the stereo image. The track develops from verse to verse before a second, more rock-like riff enters (at 1:12), providing Bonzo with an opportunity to execute a series of descending tom breaks suggesting the influence of Ginger Baker.

A change of mood occurs at 2:05 with an exchange between Plant and Page supported by a subtle rhythmic figure on the toms. This is the famous sequence in which Jimmy uses his bow, creating eerie and dissonant sonic effects and opening up new musical horizons for the group, which does not, however, mean Led Zeppelin is suddenly going to turn their back on their roots. The guitarist confirms that "'Dazed and Confused,' for example, has a progressive arrangement, but it still has strong blues elements."[15] The wailing produced by the bow is strongly enhanced by plentiful and magnificent reverb. "We used those old EMT plate reverbs,"[9] explains Page. A second guitar track, with bow and wah-wah, wanders around the stereo field from 2:46. This is followed by a rock sequence in which John Paul Jones executes a kind of rhythmic loop on his bass, supported by Bonham's powerful drums. Following a melodic exchange with Plant, Page plays a dazzlingly fast solo on his Telecaster, not necessarily his best ever, but all the same displaying amazing technical prowess, complete with unison bends and killer vibrato. Throughout this section it is just possible to make out some chords played by Jones on the Hammond M-100 organ (stereo left). Finally, after an exemplary tom break from Bonham, a reprise of the second riff, and a final verse declaimed by a Plant in peak form, the track concludes with a final sequence in which a kind of dialogue develops between the singer, the guitarist, and the drummer.

"Dazed and Confused" is one of the pillars of the Led Zeppelin catalog, with live performances that can continue for forty minutes or more. Despite the various accusations of plagiarism that have been leveled at their version since its creation, thanks to his individual talent and original musical vision, Jimmy Page can nevertheless pride himself on having taken the song to an international audience.



YOUR TIME IS GONNA COME

Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones / 4:41

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar, pedal steel guitar, backing vocals (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, organ, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, backing vocals (?)
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 3, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

John Paul Jones, who conjures up the distinctive sound world of "Your Time Is Gonna Come" on bass guitar and organ.

COVER

The British pop singer Sandie Shaw, winner of the 1967 Eurovision Song Contest with "Puppet on a String," was the first singer to cover a Led Zeppelin song, namely "Your Time Is Gonna Come" on her album *Reviewing the Situation* (1969).

Genesis

Following a lengthy introduction on church organ—a gospel influence—from John Paul Jones, Robert Plant launches into a violent diatribe against a woman who has evidently caused the male protagonist of the song a great deal of suffering. Jimmy Page wrote the words. "I never felt all that confident about my own lyrics and I was hoping Robert could do all that side."[21] They reflect his state of mind at the end of the sixties and also, in a certain sense, the hold the writings of the mage and dandy Aleister Crowley were starting to have over him. According to Crowley, the "scarlet woman" was in one sense Satan's secret weapon as the symbol of desire, and in fact woman is at the heart of Crowley's philosophical system, which he called Thelema. In any case, the charges brought against the fairer sex here are pretty damning: *Lying, cheating, hurting, that's all you seem to do/Messing around with every guy in town/Putting me down for thinking of someone new.*

But the narrator does not intend to keep his left cheek turned forever: *One of these days and it won't be long/You'll look for me baby, I'll be gone.* No, indeed, he is planning his response: *Your time is gonna come… gonna make you pay for that great big hole in my heart.* One could even be forgiven for wondering whether it is in vengeance that the "I" of the song finds his ultimate satisfaction.

Production

The second side of the original album therefore opens with the sound of the Hammond M-100 organ, giving John Paul Jones, an excellent organist as well as bassist, an opportunity to reveal a little more of his talents as a multi-instrumentalist. He plays more than a minute of solo organ during this long introduction, which is actually made up of two distinct keyboard parts. The sound is direct, with no artifice, effect, or vibrato. The only addition is a touch of discreet reverb from the EMT plate.

Led Zeppelin rarely performed "Your Time Is Gonna Come" live, one rare occasion being the concert at Budokan in Tokyo on September 24, 1971 (as part of the medley in the middle of "Whole Lotta Love"). Jimmy Page played it with the Black Crowes during the 1999–2000 tour (on the double album *Live at the Greek*, February 2000).

Jimmy Page enjoying a close musical rapport with Chris Robinson of the Black Crowes on a new version of "Your Time Is Gonna Come."

Obviously this calls to mind gospel, but also a more Baroque-like style to which Jones must have been sensitive. At 0:52 there is a change of mood, with just one organ audible on the right, playing a melodic motif based on a chord sequence that recalls the future "Torn and Frayed" (1972) by the Rolling Stones or even "Sweet Home Alabama" (1974) by Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Jimmy Page then comes in with arpeggios (played with pick) on the acoustic Gibson J-200 borrowed from Mickie Most. He is supported by John Bonham's drums and John Paul Jones's bass. As for Robert Plant, the singer by no means has to force his vocal cords in this gentle ballad (albeit a ballad with far-from-gentle lyrics), and his interpretation comes across as authentic and right. This is Led Zeppelin's first foray into folk music, a style that would combine with hard rock to form the group's trademark sound.

In the refrain, Plant is apparently joined by all four musicians in declaiming, loud and clear, a single phrase repeated four times: *Your time is gonna come*. The tone is joyful, the tuning not always spot-on, and the melody a little facile, but the track achieves a lightness that is lacking on the first side of the album. In addition to his J-200, Jimmy plays a Fender 800 pedal steel guitar for the very first time. The latter is mixed quite far back, behind the backing vocals, but nevertheless helps to reinforce the folk flavor of the song. At the end of the refrain (between 2:34 and 2:40), Page employs a curious technique, striking the strings of his guitar just above the sound hole with the flat of his right hand while forming chords with his left.

In the second verse, Page plays a number of solo phrases, still on his pedal steel guitar. "It sounds like a slide or something," he explains, adding the following surprising detail: "It's more out of tune on the first album [than the third] because I hadn't got a kit to put it together."[18]

The track concludes with a final refrain in which John Paul Jones seems to be playing his organ through the Leslie speaker while Bonham pounds his kit mercilessly. "Your Time Is Gonna Come" ends in a cross-fade with the next track, "Black Mountain Side."

BLACK MOUNTAIN SIDE

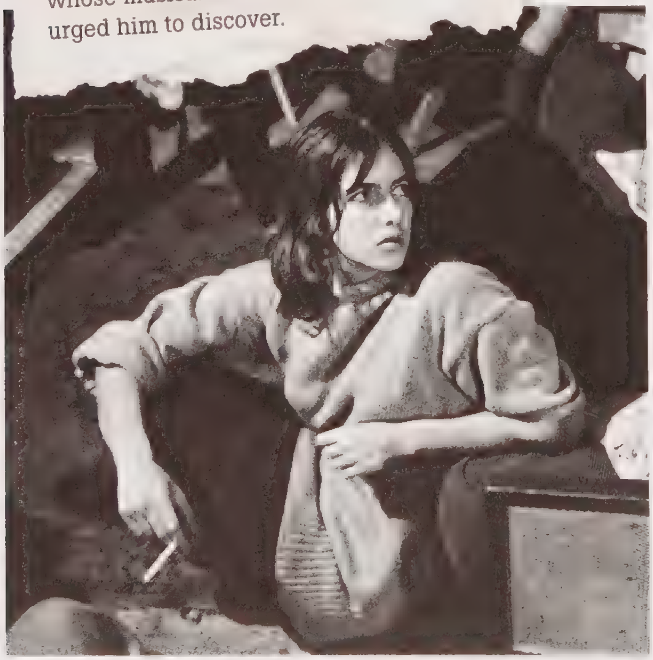
Jimmy Page / 2:06

Musicians
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar
Viram Jasani: tabla
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 15, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

As well as playing on "Black Mountain Side," the tabla player Viram Jasani, an Indian born in Kenya in 1945, has contributed to a number of movie soundtracks, including *Boom!* (Joseph Losey, 1968) and *The Trojan Women* (Michael Cacoyannis, 1971) under the musical direction of John Barry and Mikis Theodorakis, respectively.

Jimmy Page has described a conversation he had about "Black Mountain Side" with William S. Burroughs in the early seventies. It was this encounter that sparked his strong interest in Morocco—an interest shared, moreover, with Robert Plant—whose musical culture Burroughs had urged him to discover.



The English folk singer Anne Briggs, who sang "Blackwater Side," soon to become Led Zeppelin's "Black Mountain Side."

Genesis

"Black Mountain Side" testifies to Jimmy Page's love of British folk music, for which he provides further, sparkling evidence on the third Led Zeppelin album. It is also an implicit tribute to one of the most talented British (specifically Scottish) guitarists on the folk scene: Bert Jansch, who founded the group Pentangle with his friend and fellow virtuoso folk guitarist John Renbourn in 1967.

This instrumental is in fact an adaptation of "Black Water Side" (recorded by Jansch during the sessions for his album *Jack Orion* in September 1966), itself a "revisiting" of the traditional "Down by Blackwaterside" (whose title refers to a river in Northern Ireland). At around the same time, the singer Anne Briggs used to perform the song live in a version steeped in melancholy. (She would record it in 1971 for her album *Anne Briggs*.) "I wasn't totally original on that," explains the Led Zeppelin guitarist to *Guitar Player*. "It had been done in the folk clubs a lot; Annie Briggs was the first one that I heard do that riff."[18]

All the same, it is the Bert Jansch version that was the biggest inspiration for Jimmy Page. "At one point, I was absolutely obsessed with Bert Jansch. When I first heard [his 1965 debut] album I couldn't believe it. It was so far ahead of what anyone else was doing. No one in America could touch that."[11]

But "Black Mountain Side" is more than simply a cover: it is an authentic re-creation, and the traditional "Blackwaterside" is enriched by passages taken directly from "White Summer," a song Jimmy Page recorded with the Yardbirds. Another peculiarity is the use of tabla, which is played by the Indian musician Viram Jasani. To some extent, "Black Mountain Side" can be seen as the meeting of Celtic and Eastern cultures.

Although "Black Mountain Side" can be thought of as a rereading of Jansch's "Black Water Side," Jimmy Page's artistic approach is not as clear as it initially seems. While a number of his own compositions take their inspiration

The group Pentangle (left to right: Danny Thompson, Bert Jansch, Terry Cox, Jacqui McShee, and John Renbourn).

from other musicians, he is merely following the age-old history of creative people drawing on the works of others. This is the very principle of the folk, blues, jazz, and rock traditions, to cite just a few. It is what enabled artists like Chuck Berry, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and many others to create original works on the basis of a shared repertoire, works that often transcend the models that inspired them. And it is the same in all the arts—painting, literature, cinema, and so on. Out of Bert Jansch's "Black Water Side" Jimmy Page has created an instrumental that is his own, even if the metamorphosis is not immediately apparent. Admittedly his guitar arrangements veer dangerously close to Jansch's, but the latter is no more the author of the song than the Led Zeppelin guitarist is. Anne Briggs has quite rightly observed that a song can be shared and adapted by the greatest number of performers while it remains in the shadows, but as soon as it is exposed to the light, the knives come out...Which in no way detracts from Bert Jansch's talent or his own superb adaptation of this song.

Production

The opening of "Black Mountain Side" cross-fades with the end of "Your Time Is Gonna Come." "...[I] counted out how quickly I wanted each song to follow each other in order to create flow or excitement,"[15] explains Jimmy Page. Following a sequence of opening harmonics, he plays his acoustic Gibson J-200 acoustic with his characteristic combination of fingerstyle and fingerpicking, which he himself describes as the "C. I. A. [Celtic, Indian, Arabic] connection" as a way of stressing his multicultural influences. The guitar is tuned D A D G A D, an open tuning common in folk music.

The most unusual feature of the track is that its rhythmic accompaniment is executed by Viram Jasani on the tabla. For Jimmy, this is a first. "I had never worked with the musician before, and I didn't have much time to waste in the studio to get it done, but I wanted to try. If it didn't work, I would've tried something else."[15] Fortunately, it worked well. The guitarist would discover later that Jasani is also a sitar player, "[...] so perhaps that made it easier for him to understand what I was doing."[15] The only overdub on the track is a phrase with a distinctly oriental feel played on the acoustic (from 1:27), apparently in the spirit of a sitar. It is said that "Black Mountain Side" only took an hour to get down.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham / 2:26

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars, backing vocals
John Paul Jones: bass, organ, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, backing vocals (?)
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 3, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Communication Breakdown" is also the title of a song by Roy Orbison (co-written with Bill Dees) that is included on the singer's 1967 album *Cry Softly Lonely One*.

"Communication Breakdown" has given rise to a wide assortment of covers. Worthy of mention are those by Iron Maiden (*Eddie's Archive*, 2002) and the Flaming Lips (*Finally the Punk Rockers Are Taking Acid*, 2002).

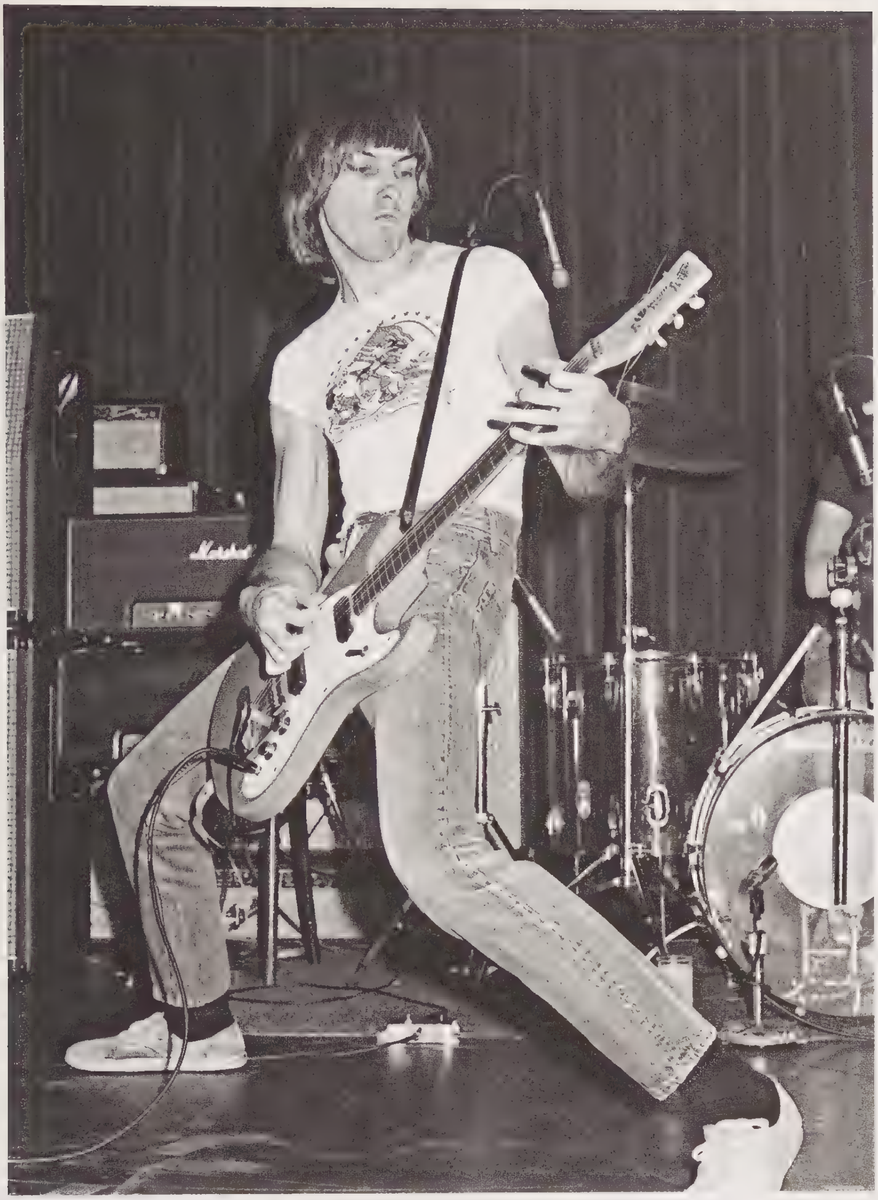
Genesis

Although Robert Plant did not receive a credit (due to an outstanding contract with CBS), he is no less the author of the lyrics to "Communication Breakdown." This time, the words constitute not an attack on the so-called weaker sex, but an outpouring of adolescent frustrations. Plant puts himself in the shoes of a teenager who suffers terribly as a result of the behavior of his girlfriend or, more accurately, the girl he would like to have as his girlfriend. *Hey, girl, you'll drive me to ruin*, gushes the protagonist. At the same time, however, he is incapable of cutting loose as there is something of the diabolical about her appeal: *Won't you let me hold you/Let me feel your loving charms?* Why are things not working out between them? Apparently because of an inability to communicate, to exist on the same wavelength, which leads the enamored—and increasingly tortured—youngster to the verge of a nervous breakdown and even insanity…

"Communication Breakdown" speaks directly to teenagers all over planet Rock because the music and rhythms developed by the four band members transcribe their adolescent frustrations. (In this connection the *Oh suck!* uttered just before Page's frenetic solo needs no further comment…) "Communication Breakdown" was chosen as the B-side of the single "Good Times Bad Times," released in the United States on March 10, 1969. The song was regularly used by the quartet as an opener before being played as an encore between 1975 and 1979.

Production

Under the provisional title "Too Good," Led Zeppelin set about recording one of the most emblematic tracks of the album on October 3, 1968. Jimmy Page opens the song on his Telecaster, launching straight into a killer riff, the hard-rock riff par excellence. The sound is aggressive, with fuzz courtesy of the Tone Bender, the wah-wah static but set in the low-medium area, and the Supro

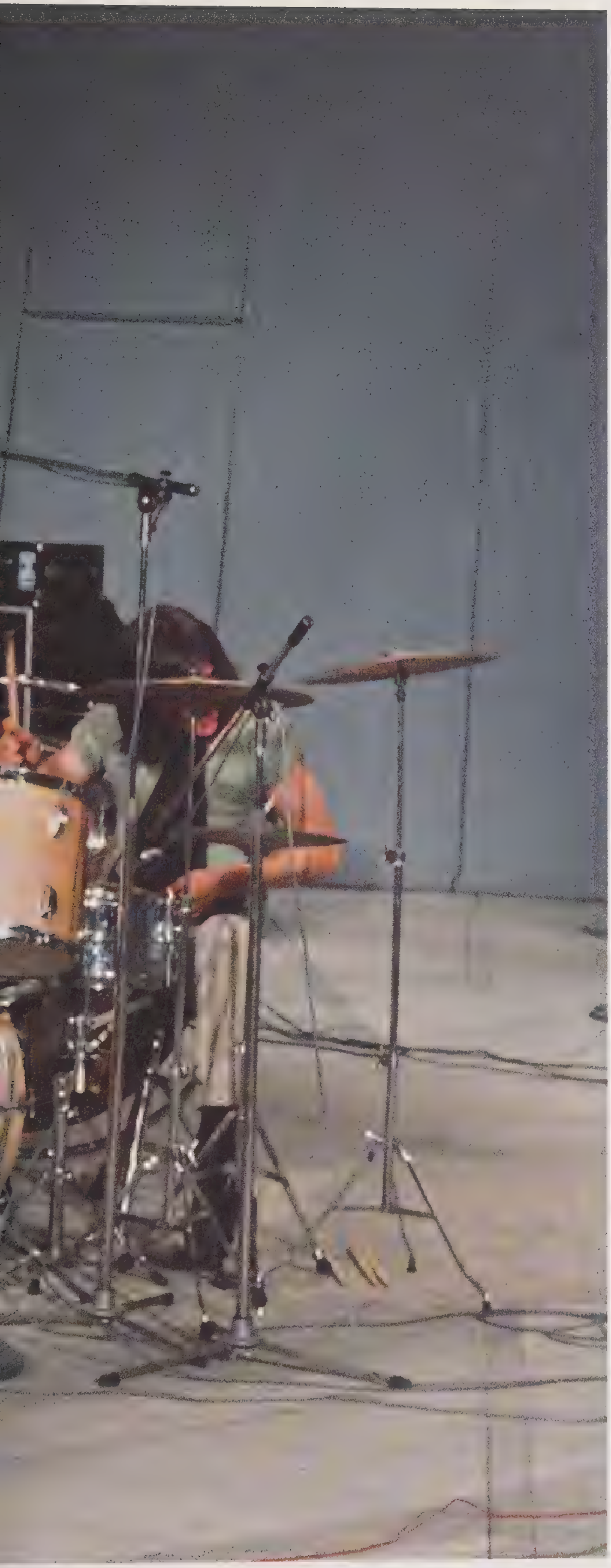


Johnny Ramone, inspired by Jimmy Page's use of the pick on "Communication Breakdown."

combo recorded in a somewhat unorthodox manner: "I put it in a small room, a tiny vocal booth-type thing and miked it from a distance. You see, there's a very old recording maxim which goes, 'Distance makes depth.'"[18] And this is exactly the approach Page takes with the album as a whole by picking up as much of the studio atmosphere as possible, paying no consideration to "bleeding" between the different sound sources—quite the contrary!

The riff Jimmy Page came up with was influenced, some have claimed, by that of Eddie Cochran's "Nervous Breakdown" (on the album *Never to Be Forgotten*, released posthumously in 1962). A quick comparison of the two pieces reveals that this is not the case at all, the only similarity being a sequence of three chords—with no harmonic similarity between the two different sets of three. On the other hand, this way of playing the riff, with a rapid downward movement of the pick (which, incidentally, Jimmy found difficult to pull off), would have an undreamed-of influence on Johnny Ramone, the Ramones guitarist. Blown away by the technique, Ramone quickly learned to master it, and this way of striking the strings would become the group's trademark.

John Bonham comes in practically from the word *go* with some absolutely staggering drums. John Paul Jones then immediately joins in, underlining Page's Telecaster with his Jazz Bass. And when Robert Plant launches into the opening line of the lyrics with his incredibly high and powerful voice, the track is transformed into one big adrenaline rush. In 1968, no one had ever heard anything of the kind and certainly nothing as radical. Once



In Paris, or more specifically the Kremlin-Bicêtre suburb of the French metropolis, for the show *Tous en scène* (June 19, 1969), on which the four members of Led Zeppelin perform "Communication Breakdown."

again, Bonham delivers some dazzling bass drum work, accompanied by Jones's very solid bass. Between the two of them, they propel the rhythm forward, establishing an incomparable energy level for their bandmates. From the first refrain, Page adds a rhythm part with a less distorted sound by way of support for the lead guitar. Jones plays a quasi-walking bass, creating the impression of additional speed, supported by the power and groove of Bonzo's drums. At the end of the next (1:21) and final (1:54) refrains, Plant can be heard screaming in the middle distance. In reality he doubles his voice, and it is one of the two that trails off the phrase (terminating in a small but effective *suck!*).

"Communication Breakdown" would not be a Led Zep anthem without a Jimmy Page solo. This he attacks with a characteristic plan, which is to play a short loop of just a few notes over several bars. In order to accentuate this swirling effect, he moves it around the stereo field, from the right toward the center. He then lets himself go with minor and major pentatonic scales and unison bends, maintaining a captivating groove all the while. His Telecaster sets the track on fire before the song moves into the third refrain. This in turn ends with an impressive roar from Plant, whose vocal capacities one cannot help admiring. Finally, in the coda, Page and Jones take care of the backing vocals, leaving the Led Zeppelin singer to improvise in the best rock tradition. It is worth noting that John Paul Jones adds an organ part in the last refrain. This Hammond organ can be more easily heard doubling the riff in the coda (right-hand channel).

Jimmy Page and his bandmates were already performing "Communication Breakdown" on the New Yardbirds' Scandinavian tour of 1968. The videos of Led Zeppelin's various television appearances, notably on the edition of the French show *Tous en scène* in June 1969, where John Bonham can be seen performing his famous and irresistible trick of playing his drums with his left hand while twirling his other drumstick in his right, offer an insight into just how stunning and innovative the group was. For many people, "Communication Breakdown" would be the song that made them sit up and take notice of Led Zeppelin.

A major exponent of the West Side Sound, Otis Rush had his first (and only) hit in 1956 with "I Can't Quit You Baby," a blues standard by the brilliant Willie Dixon.

I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY

Willie Dixon / 4:42

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 15, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

A curious edit seems to cut the twelve-bar cycle brutally short at 3:30. Even Robert Plant has had the beginning of a phrase chopped!

Genesis

The composer, arranger, lyricist, and double bass player Willie Dixon worked for Aristocrat Records after the label (founded by Charles and Evelyn Aron) had been bought by Leonard and Phil Chess at the end of the forties, and then for the same Chess brothers' Chess Records and Checker Records in the fifties, giving modern blues some of its finest and most beautiful numbers: "I Just Want to Make Love to You" for Muddy Waters, "Spoonful" and "Back Door Man" for Howlin' Wolf, "Third Degree" for Eddie Boyd, and "My Babe" for Little Walter being just a few examples. In 1956, Dixon moved away from Chess and hooked up with Eli Toscano, the owner of Cobra/Artistic, to write a new chapter in the history of the blues. This was to become known as the West Side Sound, embodied by Buddy Guy, Magic Sam, and Otis Rush.

Dixon's "I Can't Quit You Baby" sums up the West Side Sound perfectly: a combination of postwar Chicago blues and gospel. Otis Rush recorded the number in July 1956 with Wayne Bennett (guitar), Red Holloway (tenor sax), Lafayette Leake (piano), Willie Dixon (double bass), and Al Duncan (drums). This debut disc from Cobra—and Otis Rush—was a hit, climbing to sixth place on the Billboard rhythm 'n' blues chart, and in 1994 was admitted to the Blues Hall of Fame. In 1966 the emblematic guitarist of the West Side Sound was to record a second version of the song, this time for Vanguard.

Three years later, Led Zeppelin in turn recorded "I Can't Quit You Baby," creating one of the most beautiful and moving tributes ever paid by a British group to its African American elders. The words have been changed slightly, but the theme clearly remains the same: the protagonist is so in love with his girlfriend that he cannot leave her, despite the fact that she makes his life a misery. *You messed up my happy home/Made me mistreat my only child*, sings Robert Plant in the plaintive voice of a genuine bluesman. Led Zeppelin would regularly

The Bluesbreakers at the time of *Crusade*, which includes a version of "I Can't Quit You Baby." Front, left to right: Chris Mercer, John Mayall, and Dick Heckstall-Smith; standing: Keef Hartley, Keith Tillman, and Mick Taylor.

COVERS

The blues number that is "I Can't Quit You Baby" has been recorded many times, by artists from John Lee Hooker (*More Real Folk Blues*, 1991) to John Mayall & the Blues Breakers (*Crusade*, 1967). The Rolling Stones themselves included an irresistible version on their album *Blue & Lonesome* (2016), featuring, on lead guitar, the former Yardbird Eric Clapton.

perform this blues onstage up to 1970, when the song relinquished its place to another monument of the Led Zeppelin catalog, "Since I've Been Loving You." It is also worth mentioning that a live version of "I Can't Quit You Baby," recorded at the Royal Albert Hall in London on January 9, 1970, found its way onto the group's final album, *Coda*, released in 1982.

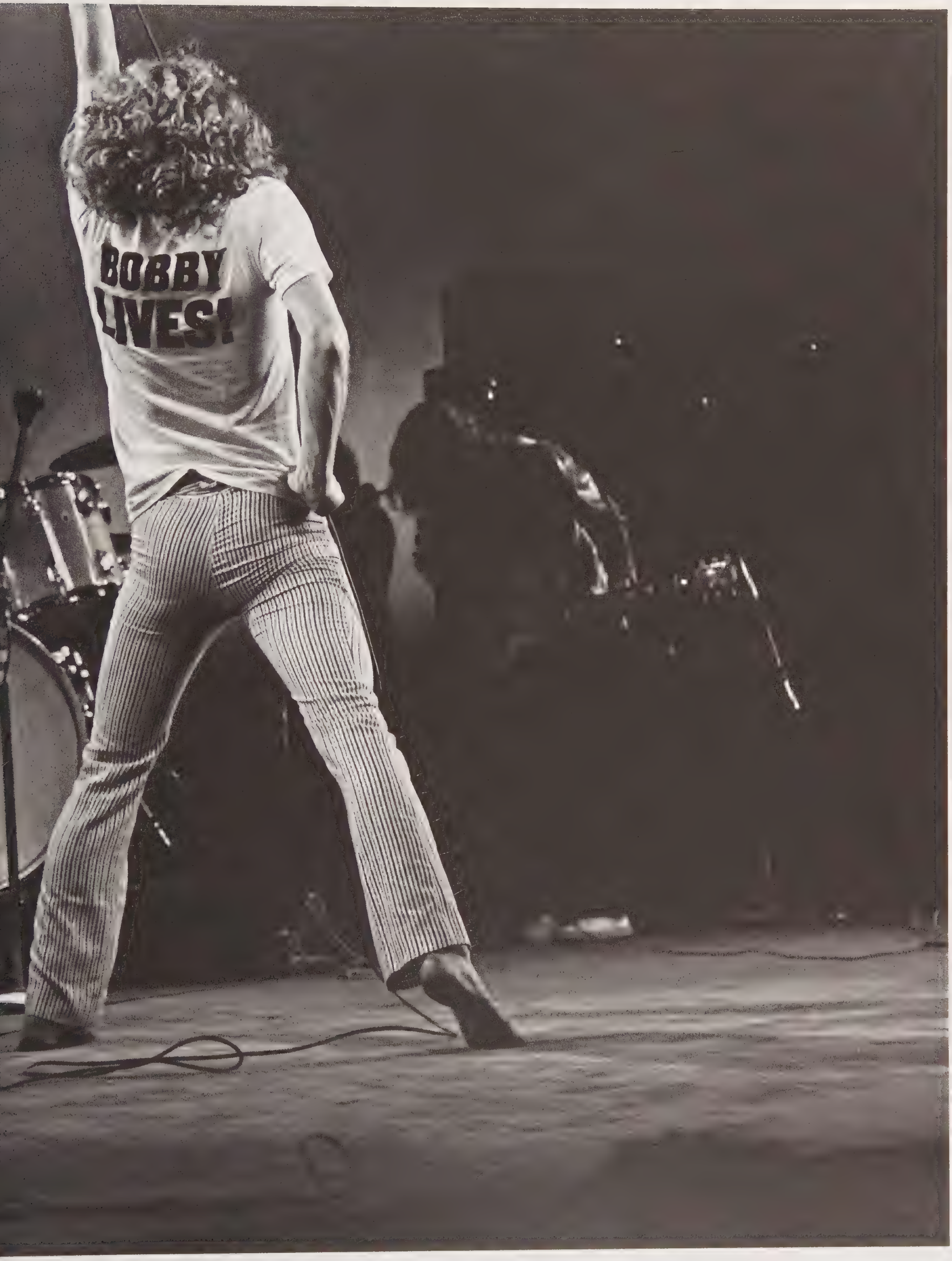
Production

Led Zeppelin's model was most probably the Otis Rush version of 1966. As Jimmy Page would explain, it was its dramatic aspect that appealed to the group: "Essentially, we put Rush's song under a microscope and figured out how to give it a bit more dynamic suspense."[15] For the guitarist, the quartet possessed a little too much originality and personality to treat the blues the same way that everyone else was doing at the time, coming up with adaptations that were very close to the original versions. They therefore looked for an individual angle of attack and found it in a semitone progression (A/B flat) at the end of each cycle: "We saw that we could turn it into a real moment,"[15] confirms Page. And it is indeed the accentuation of these two chords that lends the track its uniquely Zeppelinesque flavor. Beyond this, it is through their individual talents that the four musicians make the song their own. Compared to the Otis Rush version, the British band's is heavier and more theatrical with more of a groove. The atmosphere is just as mesmerizing and magnetic, however.

Robert Plant opens the track a cappella in a high register, the sensuality of his voice greatly intensified by reverb from the EMT plate. From the moment the rhythm section and guitar enter, the listeners are plunged into the very heart of the blues. On the drums, John Bonham develops a wonderful groove with clear jazz influences (Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa); John Paul Jones takes his bass a-walking, his ear and fingers synchronized with the bass drum of his rhythm section partner; and Jimmy Page launches into an incredible accompaniment, alternating rhythm and lead modes throughout the track. His Telecaster is drenched in Tone Bender fuzz and textured by his Supro 1624T Dual-Tone amp, while a delay from his Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo lends the resulting sound a mildly rockabilly color.

The musicians are in perfect symbiosis despite the group's recent formation. "I've been around long enough to know that very few combinations of people actually work,"[21] observes John Paul Jones. After even such a short span of time, Led Zeppelin was a well-oiled machine, with each member giving of his best. Jimmy Page in particular delivers a superb performance on guitar with highly inspired solo passages. Nevertheless, his playing is punctuated by a number of mistakes or messy passages, as he himself was to acknowledge in 1977: "There are mistakes in it, but it doesn't make any difference. I'll always leave the mistakes in. I can't help it."[18] He can be heard playing wrong notes (for example at 1:29), getting his fingers tangled up in technically demanding passages (3:17), and, more surprisingly, coming in late with certain chords (2:44, 3:36, 4:32, and 4:37). Curiously, the latter is something he would deny: "The timing bits on the A and B-flat parts are right, though it might sound wrong. The timing just sounds off."[18] One way or another, these defects in no way detract from his performance, and each of his interventions is simply radiant. Neither is Plant idle, instead howling and groaning with incredible fervor. Meanwhile, Bonham distinguishes himself once more on the bass drum (listen to the passage between 4:32 and 4:37!), while Jones, with his particular choice of notes and sense of rhythm, proves himself to be one of the best rock bassists of his day.

Robert Plant, one of the most sensual performers on the rock scene, shown here at the Newport Jazz Festival on July 6, 1969.


BOBBY
LIVES!

The *Little Robert Anthony* of the song is none other than Robert Plant himself.

HOW MANY MORE TIMES

Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham / 8:27 (3:30 on the original sleeve)

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars, bow
John Paul Jones: bass, organ
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, London: October 3, 1968
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Glyn Johns

The influence of Howlin' Wolf looms large over Led Zeppelin's version of "How Many More Times."

Genesis

"How Many More Times" is credited to Led Zeppelin (with the exception of Robert Plant, who was under contract to CBS). In reality, however, this is another song that owes a debt to the African American bluesmen. It contains the same incantatory rhythm and some of the same words as "The Hunter," a blues recorded by Albert King with the members of Booker T. and the MG's in July 1967 for his album *Born Under a Bad Sign* (1967), but also various references to "How Many More Years," a Howlin' Wolf composition recorded by the songwriter himself at Sam Phillips's Memphis Recording Service in 1951, and which Robert Plant and John Bonham had previously performed with Band of Joy. Another borrowing is the bass intro, which is somewhat reminiscent of the cover of Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightning" by the…Yardbirds. The main influence, however, is "No Place to Go," again by Howlin' Wolf (included on his album *Moanin' in the Moonlight*, released in 1959, although recorded in 1951).

The lyrics delve into the protagonist's past: how he met a young girl, the ten children they have together, with an eleventh on the way…There is also a certain sense of score settling in the spirit of a western or film noir: *They call me the hunter, that's how I got my fame/Ain't no need to hide, ain't no need to run/'Cause I've got you in the sights of my gun.*

Taken together, this makes for an explosive cocktail and a superb Led Zeppelin number. "How Many More Times" brings the group's debut album to a conclusion, and it did the same for a number of their gigs in 1969. About the two shows they played at Fillmore East in New York City on January 31 and February 1, Led Zeppelin biographer Mick Wall has the following to say: "When they left the stage nearly ninety minutes later, the final chords of 'How Many More Times' still bouncing off the walls, the crowd began stamping their feet and chanting: 'Zeppelin! Zeppelin! Zeppelin!'"[11] Citing Richard Cole,

Above: Robert Plant and Jimmy Page onstage at Teen Club Box 45 in Gladsaxe, Denmark, on March 15, 1969. **Below:** The Led Zeppelin rhythm section during the same show in Denmark.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

On the early copies of *Led Zeppelin I*, the duration of "How Many More Times" was given as 3:30 rather than 8:27 in the aim of encouraging radio stations—which would never have played such a long record—to air it.

The phrase *I got another child on the way, that makes eleven* presumably refers to Carmen Jane Plant, who was born on November 21, 1968, in other words a little over a month and a half after the recording of "How Many More Times."

he adds: "'The audience was still calling for more Led Zeppelin as Iron Butterfly began their set.'"[11]

Production

"How Many More Times" is first and foremost the bass intro played by John Paul Jones, who loops a fantastic riff adapted directly from Howlin' Wolf's "No Place to Go." His sound is silky, precise, and percussive, resulting most likely from a combination of plugging directly into the console and miking the amp. He is supported by some very swing-like drumming from John Bonham, who plays a light and subtle figure on the cymbal, enabling Jimmy Page to immediately establish a psychedelic atmosphere with a combination of his Telecaster and wah-wah. Robert Plant then joins in with a siren-like scream! The track quickly develops more rock-like sonorities, Page taking up the bass riff, adding fuzz, and overdubbing a second guitar. This time, as he explains to Brad Tolinski, he obtains his distortion via a different method: "I do remember using the board to overdrive a Leslie cabinet for the main riff in 'How Many More Times.' It doesn't sound like a Leslie because I wasn't employing the rotating speakers. Surprisingly, that sound has real weight. The guitar is going through the board, then through an amp that was driving the Leslie cabinet. It was a very successful experiment."[9]

Robert Plant launches into his lead vocal in a more or less calm voice lacking in histrionics. The rhythm is heavy, with Bonham hitting his cymbals hard. An initial instrumental break occurs at 2:04, giving the guitarist the opportunity to play some solo passages, which he supports with rhythm guitar. His Telecaster is positioned on the left of the stereo field and is answered by an echo in the opposite channel. "Those things were my ideas,"[9] he would later clarify. Bonzo accompanies him with furious drum licks before drifting off into a bolero rhythm on his snare drum (from 3:09). Page then plays a melody on his Telecaster, which he doubles and harmonizes. This is strong allusion to his friend Jeff Beck's "Beck's Bolero," which Page himself composed and produced in 1966.

At 3:35, the bolero is superseded by a bowed sequence. For the second time on the album, Jimmy uses his violin bow to create a particularly gripping atmosphere (in the spirit of "Dazed and Confused"): "I knew what was going to be overdubbed and how I was going to use the bow as melodic counterpoint. The same is with 'Whole Lotta Love,'"[15] he explains. He uses his wah-wah to modulate the frequencies and adds strong reverb in order to amplify the wailing of the strings. Plant comes in with a high, characteristically rock voice, while Bonham works his toms, supported by Jones's bass.

A new break occurs at 5:30. Plant sings a cappella, his voice carried by the EMT plate. He now evokes elements of his own past, citing "Rosie" and "Steal Away," two songs from his time with Alexis Korner. John Bonham takes this up with an absolutely incredible shuffle-like pattern that gradually develops into a funkier beat, with Jimmy Page's various guitar parts ringing out on either side of the stereo. John Paul Jones, meanwhile, supports the chords on his bass and, from 6:09, on his Hammond organ too. Finally, following one last scream from Plant, there is a reprise of the opening riff, and the track terminates on a heavy beat in an electric atmosphere.

"How Many More Times" is the result of putting together a lot of little sections that had been in Page's head since his time with the Yardbirds. "I was able to envision the finished arrangement of 'How Many More Times' before we got into the studio,"[15] he explains, and mentions elsewhere that the song had been recorded virtually live at Olympic "with cues and nods."[9]

Jimmy Page using his bow, not on his Dragon Telecaster this time, but on his Gibson Les Paul, during the band's appearance on the show *Tous en scène in* June 1969.

"How Many More Times" is the second of the three songs on which Jimmy Page uses the bow. The other two are "Dazed and Confused" and "In the Light" (on the album *Physical Graffiti*).

"Baby Come On Home" is a *tribute to* Bert Berns, shown here playing guitar during the recording of Van Morrison's *Blowin' Your Mind!* (1967).

BABY COME ON HOME

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, Bert Berns / 4:30

Musicians: **Robert Plant:** vocals / **Jimmy Page:** guitars, backing vocals (?) / **John Paul Jones:** bass, organ (?), backing vocals (?) / **John Bonham:** drums, backing vocals (?) / **Recorded**: **Olympic Sound Studios, London:** October 10, 1968 / **Technical Team**: **Producer:** Jimmy Page / **Executive Producer:** Peter Grant / **Sound Engineer:** Glyn Johns

Genesis

This track, recorded on October 10, 1968, has two more or less interchangeable titles: "Baby Come On Home" and "Tribute to Bert Burns" (spelled that way on the box of the tape master!). It is very soul in character and was evidently intended as an homage to the songwriter. Bert Berns (a.k.a. Bert Russell and also Russell Byrd), who died on December 30, 1967, is known above all as the co-composer with Phil Medley of "Twist and Shout," which was a hit for the Isley Brothers in 1963 before being recorded by the Beatles during the sessions for their first album (*Please Please Me*, 1963). Berns was clearly an important influence on British Invasion bands as well, with both the Rolling Stones and the Animals covering compositions of his, "Cry to Me" and "Baby Let Me Take You Home," respectively. Succeeding Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller in 1965, Berns was also one of the main producers at Atlantic. After that he established his own labels, Bang Records and Shout Records (for whom Janis Joplin, with Big Brother and the Holding Company, recorded another of his songs, "Piece of My Heart").

It is precisely Berns's role as a catalyst in the rock scene of the sixties, and his links with Atlantic, that the members of Led Zeppelin wanted to celebrate in this adaptation of "Baby Come On Home," which had previously been recorded by Hoagy Lands (1964) and then Solomon Burke. The song was not included on the first album for the simple reason that it was too different from all the other tracks. It was, however, the subject of various bootlegs before reaching the ears of a mass audience with the release of *Led Zeppelin [Boxed Set 2]* in 1993. "Baby Come On Home" was used to promote this compilation and was released as a single in September 1993, achieving an honorable number 4 on the Billboard chart (Mainstream Rock Songs category) on October 9.

Production

The group completed only the third take of the song, the first two (without lead vocal) having been aborted midway. The version included on *Boxed Set 2* has been cleaned up quite a bit compared to the rough mix of the recording made on October 10, 1968. On that, a fuzz bass of highly dubious taste was present that has now, thankfully, been removed. This track possesses an almost unbelievable charm, and yet it is completely at odds with the rest of the Led Zeppelin catalog. It is a slow number in the best soul and rhythm 'n' blues tradition. Jimmy Page plays arpeggios on his Telecaster with a very present tremolo, John Paul Jones warms the heart with some excellent Hammond organ played through his Leslie, John Bonham lays down a simple

rhythm with a certain swing, and Robert Plant delivers a superb vocal performance worthy of the greats of the genre. It should be pointed out that by 1968, Robert Anthony Plant had already been singing his heart out on soul and other standards for many years. Nevertheless one can only admire his performance. John Paul Jones makes himself useful, too, literally popping up everywhere with a bass line, an accompaniment on the Hammond organ, and a piano part as well. He too had notched up some pretty solid experience… Jimmy Page, meanwhile, is happy to remain in the background with his arpeggios but delivers some solo passages during the third verse (from 2:43), with phrases colored by Jones's Leslie speaker. It is interesting to note the backing vocals in the refrains, whose style is reminiscent of Joe Cocker's "With a Little Help from My Friends," the sublime Beatles cover on which Jimmy Page plays guitar (released in 1968).

"Baby Come On Home" is a very good composition performed by four musicians who had mastered their art. It is said that the tape was found by chance in a garbage can in 1991, when Olympic Studios was renovated. Whether or not this account is true, it would have been an enormous shame had the recording never seen the light of day. "I don't think we finished it," comments Jimmy Page, "the backing vocals weren't very clever. And, at the time, we thought everything else was better. Simple as that, really. But don't get me wrong, the track is good and Plant's singing is excellent. It's just that we set such a high standard for ourselves."[9]

The Yardbirds, whose influence on "Sugar Mama" is unmistakable. Left to right: Jim McCarty, Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Chris Dreja, and Keith Relf.

SUGAR MAMA

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 2:50

Musicians: Robert Plant: vocals / **Jimmy Page:** guitars / **John Paul Jones:** bass, organ (?) / **John Bonham:** drums / **Recorded: Olympic Sound Studios, London:** October 3, 1968 / **Technical Team: Producer:** Jimmy Page / **Executive Producer:** Peter Grant / **Sound Engineer:** Glyn Johns

Genesis

A "sugar mama" is generally a woman of a certain age who supports a younger man financially in exchange for sexual favors. *I'm just a gigolo*, sang Louis Prima in the fifties; *Say you love me, sugar mama, I'll never let you go*, shrieks Robert Plant here.

The song was rejected for the definitive track listing of *Led Zeppelin I*, no doubt because it was not a good fit with the quartet's stylistic approach. It is, however, included on CD3 of the deluxe version of *Coda*, released in 2015.

Production

There is perhaps another explanation for the rejection of "Sugar Mama": the riff bears a strange resemblance to that of "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago," recorded by the Yardbirds in 1966 with Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page on guitars. The similarity is striking, and Jimmy presumably realized this before finalizing it. It is nevertheless a good number, and with some more work would probably have matched the level of the other songs on the album, although it has to be said that the funky rhythm would not really have suited the general atmosphere, which is far more rock and blues.

Jimmy Page opens "Sugar Mama" with some reasonably clear-toned funk guitar. The rhythm section pours in energetically after him, John Paul Jones's bass reinforcing the Telecaster riff and John Bonham's drums quickly settling into a groove. The guitarist overdubs a second guitar, doubling the riff with a mild fuzz, some reverb, and with either the wah-wah set halfway or the guitar playing through the Leslie speaker. When Robert Plant launches into his lead vocal, he seems to fall short of the required tessitura, and that the song is too high for him becomes particularly apparent at 0:31. This does not prevent him from drawing his bandmates into an altogether exhilarating performance, however. Between 1:21 and 1:29 the drums can be heard unaccompanied, John Bonham providing a demonstration—should any be needed—of the power and exceptional swing of which he was capable and that made him so unique, and also of his incredible prowess on the bass drum. Page takes a solo at 1:29, his guitar doubled either by a treatment of the sound obtained through the Leslie speaker or by Jones's organ, which follows him like a shadow. Uncharacteristically for the group, "Sugar Mama" ends with a rallentando.

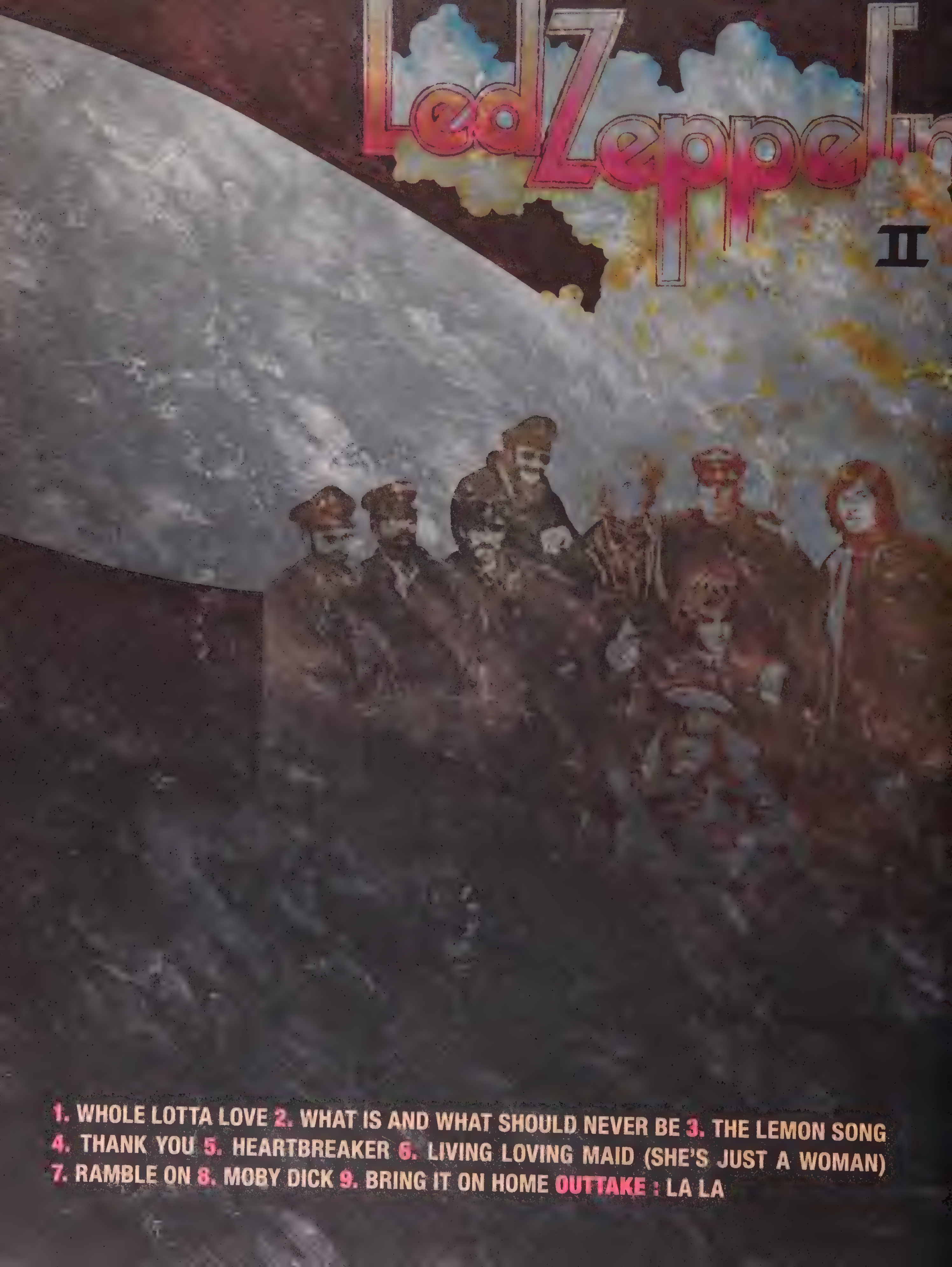
This track has its qualities, but there are too many obstacles to its inclusion on an album other than as an official outtake.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Led Zeppelin reportedly recorded another version of "Sugar Mama" at Morgan Studios on June 25, 1969. This remains unconfirmed, however.

"Sugar Mama" is also the title of a track recorded by the four members of the New Yardbirds (a.k.a. the future Led Zeppelin) during their first-ever outing on disc in September 1968, when they played on P. J. Proby's album *Three Week Hero* (1969). Needless to say, the two tracks are as different as chalk and cheese.

Departures



1. WHOLE LOTTA LOVE 2. WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE 3. THE LEMON SONG
4. THANK YOU 5. HEARTBREAKER 6. LIVING LOVING MAID (SHE'S JUST A WOMAN)
7. RAMBLE ON 8. MOBY DICK 9. BRING IT ON HOME **OUTTAKE :** LA LA

ALBUM LED ZEPPELIN II

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: October 31, 1969

Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: 588198

United States: October 22, 1969

Number 1 (United Kingdom and United States)

LED ZEPPELIN II

Portrait of the band in 1969 around the time of the sessions for their second LP.

LED ZEPPELIN II: THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE OF HEAVY METAL

Led Zeppelin's debut album was released during the British quartet's inaugural North American tour, consisting of twenty-nine dates between December 26, 1968, and February 15, 1969. It was during four shows at the Fillmore West in San Francisco between January 9 and 12 that the group became aware of the incredible effect they were having on their audiences, as Jimmy Page recalls: "Over the four days at the Fillmore the audience got a mass injection of what we were about. It is safe to say the reputation of the group travelled like wildfire across the States from this moment and these San Francisco dates were a pivotal point in the band's career."[1] Boosted by the radio stations, which plugged tracks from their first album (released on January 12) all day long, the quartet were on their way to conquering the United States in spite of a press that was still only lukewarm. What they had to do next was return to their native country and win over the public and the media there, both of which had ignored them at the end of 1968.

Laying Siege to the Rock Circuit

So America was followed by Led Zeppelin's first European tour: thirty-two shows in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia between February 24 and April 17 (April 14 not confirmed). To no avail: Britain was resisting their assault, although the first signs of a tentative enthusiasm for the group could be detected. Peter Grant had organized a second American tour to follow on immediately, twenty-eight gigs between April 18 and May 31 (April 23 not confirmed; two shows per day on May 30 and 31), during the course of which *Led Zeppelin I* entered the Billboard Top 10, and then a series of ten concerts between June 13 and 29 in the United Kingdom (two on May 29), which would finally spark an interest—soon to be followed by collective hysteria—in the quartet. A third American tour ensued, taking in thirty cities between July 5 and August 31. By the end of 1969 there would be another European tour (October 3–12) including a date at the Olympia in Paris (October 10) and a fourth American tour from October 17 to November 8. Over the course of these shows, Led Zeppelin gradually made their mark as one of the best live rock 'n' roll groups on the planet—and were even attracting comparisons with the Rolling Stones and the Who.

Twentieth-Century Bacchanalia

Led Zeppelin on tour was rampant debauchery and the living out of adolescent fantasies. The master of ceremonies of these latter-day bacchanalia was Richard Cole (Peter Grant's right-hand man) and the offerings to the

HOLLYWOOD
California
TEENSET
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FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

While recording their second album in Los Angeles, the members of Led Zeppelin often found themselves in the company of the GTOs. This was a clique of groupies that sprang up around Frank Zappa. One of them, Pamela Ann Miller, known as Miss Pamela (later Pamela Des Barres after marrying actor and Power Station singer Michael Des Barres), set her sights on Jimmy Page.

The GTOs posing for the cover of *Teenset* magazine (January 14, 1969). Left to right: Misses Cynderella, Sandra, Christine, and, in front, Pamela (Des Barres).

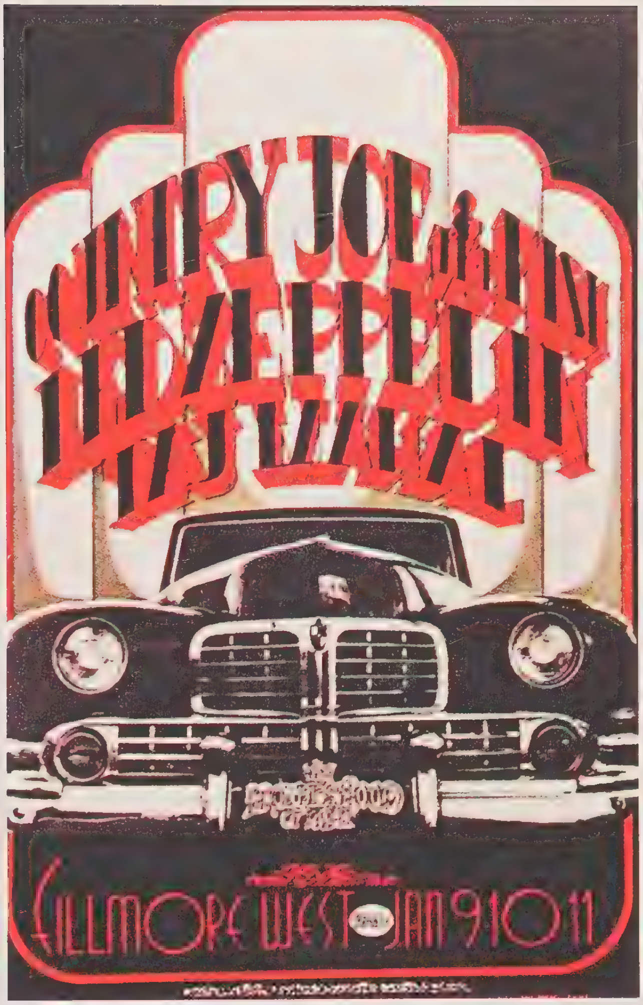
"gods" were the groupies—in particular the famous and voracious GTOs (short for Girls Together Outrageously, Girls Together Only, Girls Together Occasionally, or Girls Together Often)—who were ready to give themselves up to every excess in order to satisfy the desires of their favorite rock stars. It was during the second American tour that Led Zeppelin acquired their scurrilous reputation. Richard Cole would acquaint Robert Plant and John Bonham with the United States and life on tour, unlike Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones, who were battle-hardened by their years as professional musicians. Led Zeppelin would leave indelible traces—true or not—of their passing and of their excesses, transforming the group into the wild beasts of the rock world. Stories started flying around of orgies, of drinking binges, of the "shark episode," of an alternative use being found for cream cakes, of nudism onstage, and so on. And of more sinister and dangerous behavior too: Peter Grant is reported to have saved *Life* journalist Ellen Sander from the clutches of Bonham and two members of the team who were allegedly getting ready to rape her. A few years later, Sander would comment on her misadventure with the following carefully chosen words: "If you walk inside the cages of a zoo you get to see the animals close up, stroke the captive pelts, and mingle with the energy behind the mystique. You also get to smell the shit firsthand."[3]

Return to the Studio

In view of all the concerts played to full houses, from the Whisky a Go Go in West Hollywood to the Fillmore East in New York City, and the coast-to-coast success of *Led Zeppelin I*, Ahmet Ertegun wanted to get a second album out as soon as possible. For the founder of Atlantic, "as soon as possible" meant, ideally, summer 1969, when the group were in the middle of their third American tour. Having been informed of this in April, Peter Grant duly talked Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham into taking to the studio again—the studio in question being none other than Olympic in London, where, just a few months after their first album, they would record "Whole Lotta Love" and "What Is and What Should Never Be." Not long after, Ahmet Ertegun changed his mind, settling on October for the release of the new album in the United States.

The first two, London-recorded tracks, along with the seven others that would make it onto the album, were therefore developed and shaped on tour during rare moments of rest, in the fever of after-parties, in impersonal motel rooms, and during rehearsals or jam sessions

Jimmy Page during Led Zeppelin's second American tour, when he made an impression on the attractive Pamela.



Poster for the English band's appearance at Fillmore West in San Francisco on January 9, 1969.

in the studio. Hence the explosion of energy, sensuality, and, to an even greater extent, eroticism in the songs. "It was still blues-based but it was a much more carnal approach to the music and quite flamboyant," Robert Plant would tell Nigel Williamson. "It was created on the run between hotel rooms and the GTOs, and that was quite something."[22]

Evidently a threshold had been crossed. "Whole Lotta Love" and "What Is and What Should Never Be" were "the first numbers written with the band in mind,"[11] Jimmy Page would later reveal. At the same time, the involvement in the songwriting of Robert Plant (in particular as lyricist) but also of John Paul Jones and John Bonham became such a normal state of affairs that Led Zeppelin could no longer be described as Jimmy Page's group, rather as a group of four complementary musicians and partners. Nevertheless, it would seem that the legitimacy of Robert Plant within the group could not be taken for granted. It was on him that the American media focused, judging his voice to be too shrill and his behavior excessive. And the rest of the group was reportedly thinking similar thoughts, even nicknaming him "Percy" (a reference to Percy Thrower, an English gardener and BBC star!). According to Richard Cole, Jimmy Page did not see Plant in an altogether positive light: "It was a very touch-and-go thing whether Robert would even be in the group after the first tour, because he didn't quite seem to make it up to Pagey's expectation. At the time there was a possibility he wouldn't do another tour. That was the truth."[3] Whether this really is true or not, Plant would rapidly consolidate his position as lead singer and eventually steal the show from Page—to the guitarist's great annoyance.

The Album

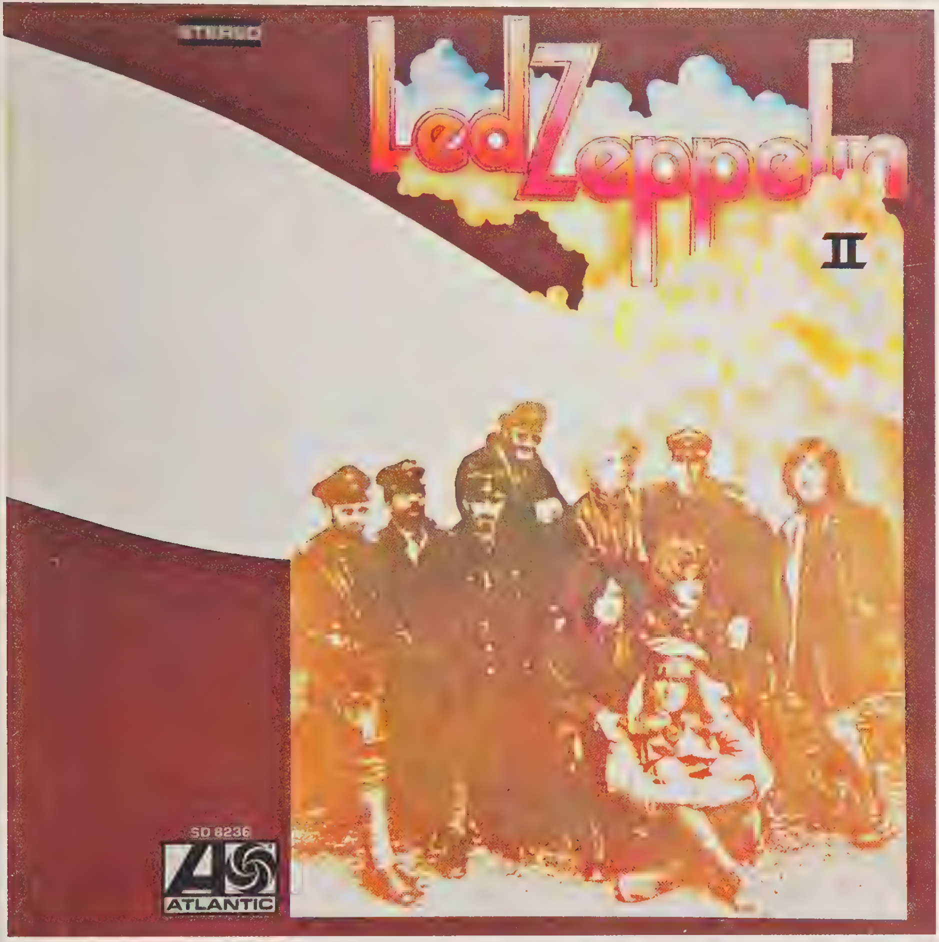
From a musical point of view, this second album can be seen as a logical continuation of the first. Borrowings from, and references to, the African American blues are still in evidence (to the intense annoyance of the Chess brothers and Willie Dixon) as is the influence of the Anglo-Irish ballad. The difference lies above all in the

Led Zeppelin's tour manager Richard Cole, appropriately garlanded, in Honolulu.

interpretation and overall sound. (In this regard Eddie Kramer's role was key.) "Before this album, heavy rock was just one musical strand," writes French rock journalist Philippe Manœuvre. "After, it would become a way of life, a manifesto."[23] With *Led Zeppelin II*, the horizons of the rock scene suddenly expanded. Blues rock, folk, guitar pyrotechnics, cries of anger and ecstasy, incantatory rhythms…the airship had lifted off for some very high spheres, somewhere between the Beatles' "Helter Skelter" and Hendrix's "Voodoo Chile," or higher still, in the rock 'n' roll galaxy. Not only was it a glorification—and a more brilliant one than the first album—of hard rock–heavy metal, *Led Zeppelin II* was a seminal disc that made clear that the soundtrack to the seventies was going to differ from that to the sixties. "I wanted *II* to be quite extreme," Jimmy later said. "That's what I was going for, something that showed all the peaks of what we could do."[24] Another departure from *Led Zeppelin I* was Robert Plant's desire, as lyricist, to broach personal themes ("What Is and What Should Never Be," "Thank You") and to guide the listener along the as yet little-explored byways of heroic fantasy ("Ramble On"), not to forget the recurrent sexual metaphors ("Whole Lotta Love," "The Lemon Song"), something Plant has in common with any self-respecting bluesman or rocker.

By the time *Led Zeppelin II* was released in North America on October 22, 1969, it had been preordered by some 500,000 American fans. This is an indication of the exponential increase in the popularity of the quartet since their first tour. The album went on sale in Britain and continental Europe about ten days later, on October 31. On both sides of the Atlantic the album became a hit with lightning speed. In the United States it topped the Billboard chart by the end of December and had become the best-selling LP of the year, ahead of the Beatles' *Abbey Road*. In the United Kingdom *Led Zeppelin II* entered the charts on November 8 and remained there for 129 weeks, reaching the number 1 spot on February 1, 1970. It would also top the charts in Australia, Canada, West Germany, Spain, and Denmark, and reach number 2 in Italy and number 3 in France.

Generally speaking, the LP was also well received by the music press. "Music for the paranoic 20th Century city man—another brilliant album from the remarkable Led Zeppelin and the first in transit, so to speak, as *Led Zeppelin I* was recorded in an embryonic state […],"[25] wrote Nick Logan in the *NME*. *Rolling Stone*'s John



The sleeve of Led Zeppelin's second album. The design was commissioned from British artist David Juniper.

Mendelsohn, who panned the first LP, changed his tune for this album, writing about Page: "Shit, man, on this album he further demonstrates that he could absolutely fucking *shut down* any white bluesman alive, and with one fucking hand tied behind his back too."[26] Mendelsohn must have foreseen in 1969 that forty years after its release the album would be certified twelve times Platinum in the United States (twelve million copies sold)!

Led Zeppelin II currently occupies seventy-ninth place in the *Rolling Stone* list of the best albums of all time and third place in the British *Guitarist* magazine's list of most influential guitar albums.

The Sleeve

It was to a young British artist called David Juniper that Jimmy Page entrusted the task of designing the sleeve for Led Zeppelin's second album. The only instruction issued by the guitarist was that Juniper should come back with something interesting. Juniper had only a few days. Suddenly, the idea came to him to rework a photograph of Jasta 11 (or to give it its full name the Königlich Preußische Jagdstaffel Nr. 11), the renowned German fighter squadron formed in 1916, in which Manfred von Richthofen (the "Red Baron") and his younger brother Baron Lothar von Richthofen served during the First World War alongside Karl Emil Schäfer, Karl Almenröder, Baron Raven von Barnekow, and Ernst Udet. To start with, Juniper retouched the photo (extracted from a book called *Sopwith Camel*), giving the black-and-white image a sepia tint and then substituting the faces of the four members of the group for those of four of the aces. He also amused himself by giving the other pilots a beard or sunglasses. The concept appealed to Jimmy Page, who asked Juniper to go a stage further and add the faces of Peter Grant, Richard Cole, the bluesman Blind Willie Johnson (something of a role model for the guitarist, who would later be inspired by Johnson's "Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed" to compose "In My Time of Dying" on *Physical Graffiti*), and also Glynis Johns (the actress who plays Mrs. Banks, the mother of Mary Poppins's young charges in Robert Stevenson's 1964 movie). Why Glynis Johns? Might this be an allusion to the sound engineer Glyn Johns, who, unlike his brother Andy, was not involved in the recording of *Led Zeppelin II*? Highly likely! In the end, neither Grant nor Cole nor Glynis Johns, nor perhaps even Blind Willie Johnson, made it onto the cover. "In amongst the four band members (airbrushed in from a publicity photograph) are Miles Davis

YOUR 1969
HOROSCOPE

Top: Robert Plant and Jimmy Page engrossed in their horoscopes.
Bottom: An exhausting American tour.

Arriving in Honolulu on May 12, 1969, during their second American tour.

Above: The producer Eddie Kramer (seated, center) at Right Track Studios in New York in 1987.
Right: The Undertakers in London in March 1964.

After playing Hamburg's famous Star Club with the Undertakers in 1962, Chris Huston turned to sound engineering and went on to work with artists such as the Who, Eric Burdon & War, and Jake Holmes.

(or was it Blind Willie Johnson?), a girlfriend/muse of Andy Warhol (perhaps Mary Woronov) and the astronaut Neil Armstrong,"[38] explains David Juniper. The artistic director made one small error in that the face he took to be Neil Armstrong's is actually that of the astronaut Frank Borman! The foregrounded photomontage takes up a little more than a quarter—the lower right-hand portion—of the sleeve. Behind it, the white silhouette of a zeppelin can be seen emerging from the smoke against a brown background—hence the album's nickname, the "Brown Bomber."

The interior visuals provide a strong contrast. The initial idea was to have a picture of a zeppelin overflying the Statue of Liberty. David Juniper worked on another concept, inspired by a German architectural photograph of the twenties that showed a spotlit zeppelin hovering above a building resembling the Acropolis in Athens. In front of the building are four blocks of stone, each bearing the name of a member of the group. The result is one of the most eye-catching rock album covers ever, and earned Juniper a Grammy nomination for best album cover in 1970.

The Recording

Due to the unrelenting pace of touring, the recording sessions for Led Zeppelin's second album extended over a period of several months, from April to August 1969, and were held at no less than thirteen different studios. Although excited by the prospect of recording new songs, Jimmy Page and his group dragged their feet over the actual work, worn out by an insane schedule that flipped them incessantly from concert venue to recording studio to concert venue. Bonham suffered from homesickness, Jones retreated into silence, and the increasingly directive Page was wracked with doubt over the final result: "It [the second album] took a long time on and off, having to write numbers in hotel rooms. It was insane, really. We'd put down a rhythm track in London, add the vocals in New York, put in a harmonica, say, in Vancouver, and then go back to New York to do the mixing. By the time the album came out I'd lost confidence with it."[27]

The initial sessions took place at Olympic Studios in Barnes, London, between April 14 and 19, 1969, and were engineered by George Chkiantz. Chkiantz had won his spurs two years earlier working on the eponymous first album of the Small Faces, recorded partly at Olympic Studios and released on Andrew Loog Oldham's Immediate Records label, and then on the Beatles' "All You Need Is Love," when he had been one of the assistants. Such was the esteem in which he was held by the rock musicians of the day that in 1969, the year he embarked on a collaboration with Led Zeppelin that was to continue for several years, Chkiantz's name was also associated with various other major bands on the British rock scene including Soft

The four members of Led Zeppelin, with Peter Grant and Atlantic producer Jerry Wexler, after receiving their first gold disc for *Led Zeppelin* on July 22, 1969.

Machine (*Volume Two*), Blind Faith (*Blind Faith*), and Ten Years After (*Ssssh*).

After Olympic Studios, where "Whole Lotta Love" and "What Is and What Should Never Be" were laid down, as well as "La La" (not used on the album), Led Zeppelin crossed the Atlantic for their second American tour. Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham would record most of *Led Zeppelin II* throughout a good part of May and then on and off until August 30.

First leg: California. After trying out Gold Star Recording Studios in Los Angeles (onetime base of Del-Fi Records and the "home" studio of Ritchie Valens, Eddie Cochran, and Phil Spector with his famous Wall of Sound), they had a fruitless time at Quantum Recording Studios in Torrance. Next, their choice fell on A&M Studios in Hollywood for the "Whole Lotta Love" overdubs, from April 28 to 30, and then, between May 4 and 5, on Mystic Sound Studios, founded by sound engineer Chris Huston, who was at the controls for "The Lemon Song," "Moby Dick," and "Bring It On Home." May 6 found Led Zeppelin working on "Moby Dick" at Mirror Sound in Los Angeles, and on May 10 they made a rapid detour via R&D Studios in Vancouver to do Robert Plant's vocals and harmonica overdubs on "Bring It On Home" with sound engineer Douglas Gyseman. That very day they were performing at the PNE Agrodome in the same metropolis in British Columbia.

Second leg: New York City. This time the engineer was Eddie Kramer, who could pride himself on having recorded Jimi Hendrix's *Are You Experienced*, *Axis: Bold As Love*, and *Electric Ladyland*, as well as *Mr. Fantasy* by Traffic. Kramer was well acquainted with John Paul Jones, who had played *Led Zeppelin I* to him a few months before, and also having spent several years working in the English studios with Jimmy Page. For such a sound engineer as Kramer, to record the British quartet was an incredibly exciting challenge: "I don't think they were 110% happy with the first record," recalls Kramer. "[...] They started cutting tracks in England I think for the second record and then they were on tour and brought all the tapes with them and then they cut tracks in odd places on the road. They were about halfway through the record then they said 'we're coming into New York, do you want to help us finish it up?' and I said 'absolutely.' We cut tracks in various studios in New York."[28] In another interview he mentions that "some of Jimmy's guitar solos were taped in hallways."[11] It was thus with Kramer that Led Zeppelin recorded "Heartbreaker" at A&R Studios on May 21, and then the overdubs for "What Is and What Should Never Be" and "Ramble On" at Groove Studios on June 1 and Juggy Sound Studio on June 2. Finally, at Mayfair Recording Studios on June 3, John Bonham reportedly recorded a number of drum solos for "Moby Dick."

Jimmy Page at Groove Studios in New York on June 1, 1969, during work on the band's second album.

The third leg was London and Morgan Studios, with Andy Johns at the controls. On June 25 they recorded four tracks: "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" and "Thank You," plus "We're Gonna Groove" and "Sugar Mama," which would ultimately be left off the album.

Finally, the fourth and last leg took place stateside. First of all at Atlantic Studios, where the group did some more work on "Bring It On Home" and "Heartbreaker" on July 22 or 23. Then a return to A&M Studios in Hollywood on August 5 for the "Lemon Song" overdubs, and eventually on August 29 and 30 to A&R Studios in Manhattan for the final mixing of the album's nine tracks on what was, according to Eddie Kramer, "the most primitive console you could imagine."[11]

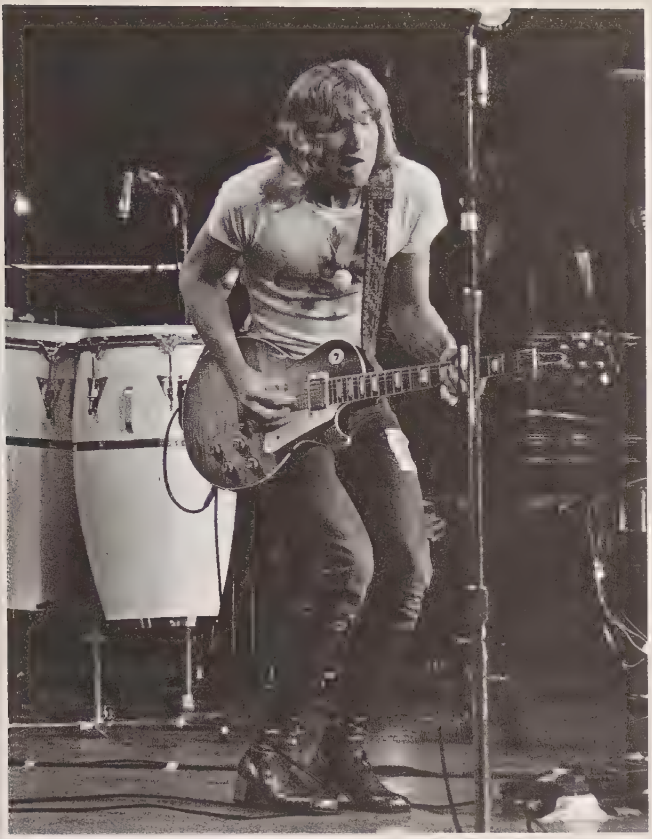
Thirteen Studios on Two Continents

So *Led Zeppelin II* required a total of thirteen studios, of which two were probably considered unsatisfactory, and almost twenty days of recording and two of mixing. This compares to barely four sessions for their first album. Nevertheless, the group can be said to have achieved a real feat in recording the second album under such difficult circumstances—between an avalanche of performances and a tornado of liberating but destructive excesses. "Part of the excitement of the album is due to the fact we were completely energized from the live shows and the touring,"[9] Page would claim. The guitarist once again assumed the role of producer, with Peter Grant as executive producer. This time Glyn Johns, the sound engineer on *Led Zeppelin I*, was not in on the action, Page having rejected his request for a production credit. Johns was replaced by George Chkiantz, Chris Huston, Douglas Gyseman, Andy Johns, and Eddie Kramer. "I consciously kept changing engineers because I didn't want people to think that they were responsible for our sound. I wanted people to know it was me,"[9] explains Page. All these different recordings, the work of the various different sound engineers, would be consolidated and unified by Eddie Kramer with the help of the talented guitarist during the final mixing in August. "I mixed the whole album with Jimmy,"[27] confirms Kramer.

Finally, unlike the first album, there were no external musicians involved in the making of the album, the four Englishmen proving themselves self-sufficient in this respect.

Technical Details

When the group returned to Olympic Studios (having previously given birth to *Led Zeppelin I* there), Jimmy Page chose once again to record in the immense hall that



Joe Walsh and the famous Gibson Les Paul Sunburst (played by Jimmy Page on *Led Zeppelin II*?).

In June 2014 a remastered *Led Zeppelin II* was released in six different versions. The deluxe and super deluxe editions include alternative takes, backing tracks, and the previously unreleased instrumental "La La."

was Studio One. George Chkiantz would comment that Studio One was equipped with only an eight-track tape recorder whereas Studio Two had a sixteen-track machine, but as a clued-in producer, Page preferred the large proportions of Studio One, where he could obtain the necessary space for John Bonham's drums, planning as he was to record the kit in stereo. Chkiantz helped him to realize this sonic plan and although relatively inexperienced at the time, placed his mics with care: "I didn't mike the snare, since that would have reduced the size and space of the drum sound. Instead, I used a stereo mike on an eight-foot boom above the drums, along with two distant side mikes to give the tom-toms edge, and a huge AKG D30 mike positioned about two feet from the bass drum."[29] In order to isolate the drums more effectively, he installed Bonham on a platform about 18 inches (45 centimeters) high. As for Robert Plant's voice, after a number of attempts to capture him live in the studio, he was forced to put the singer in a booth by himself in order to prevent his enormous vocal power from "bleeding" into the other mics.

In 1969, Olympic Studios underwent an equipment upgrade. Now, the Studio One console, designed once more by Dick Swettenham, boasted twenty-four inputs and eight outputs, and the tape recorder was an eight-track 3M M23, the new standard in the United Kingdom.

All the studios used by the group during the making of the album were therefore equipped with eight-track tape recorders in order to match the standard chosen by Jimmy Page. Some of these studios, such as Juggy Sound Studio in New York and R&D Studios in Vancouver, would fail to meet the usual professional criteria. Others, such as Morgan Sound Studios, whose chief sound engineer was Glyn Johns's brother Andy, were equipped with Cadac desks and Scully one-inch eight-track tape recorders. The monitors were Tannoy Gold in Lockwood cabinets. Mystic Sound Studios had a Spectra Sonics console, probably the 1020-16 model, and an Ampex eight-track tape recorder.

Finally, the famous desk on which Eddie Kramer and Jimmy Page did the final mix at A&R studios in New York on August 29 and 30 was in all likelihood the legendary Altec 250SU with tubes. "It had only twelve channels, with old-fashioned rotary dials to control track levels instead of sliding faders, and there were just two pan pots [control knobs] to send the sound from left to right channels,"[29] recalls Chkiantz. Despite its antiquated appearance, this console possessed some exceptional qualities that contributed to *Led Zeppelin II*'s remarkable sound. This has ensured that the Altec remains in great demand even today among enthusiasts of that particular sound.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

After recording at Mystic Sound Studios in Hollywood with Led Zeppelin on May 4 and 5, Jimmy Page and John Bonham were back there again on May 7 and 8 to cut an album with Screaming Lord Sutch.

A conspicuous figure on the English rock scene in the sixties, Screaming Lord Sutch was also a disc jockey on his own pirate radio station in 1964.

Following spread: Led Zeppelin at the Olympia in Paris on October 10, 1969.

The Instruments

For the recording of *Led Zeppelin II*, Jimmy Page would abandon his Dragon Tele, at least for some of the time. The reason was that Joe Walsh, guitarist with the James Gang and later the Eagles, thought one of his own 1959 Gibson Les Paul Sunbursts would be perfect for Page. "When Joe Walsh was trying to sell me his Les Paul," explains Page, "I said, 'I'm quite happy with my Telecaster.' But as soon as I played it, I fell in love. Not that the Tele isn't user-friendly, but the Les Paul was so gorgeous and easy to play."[9] It was therefore with no hesitation that Page bought the guitar in April 1969, for $500 according to the buyer and $1,200 according to Walsh. He immediately baptized it "Number One," which speaks volumes…

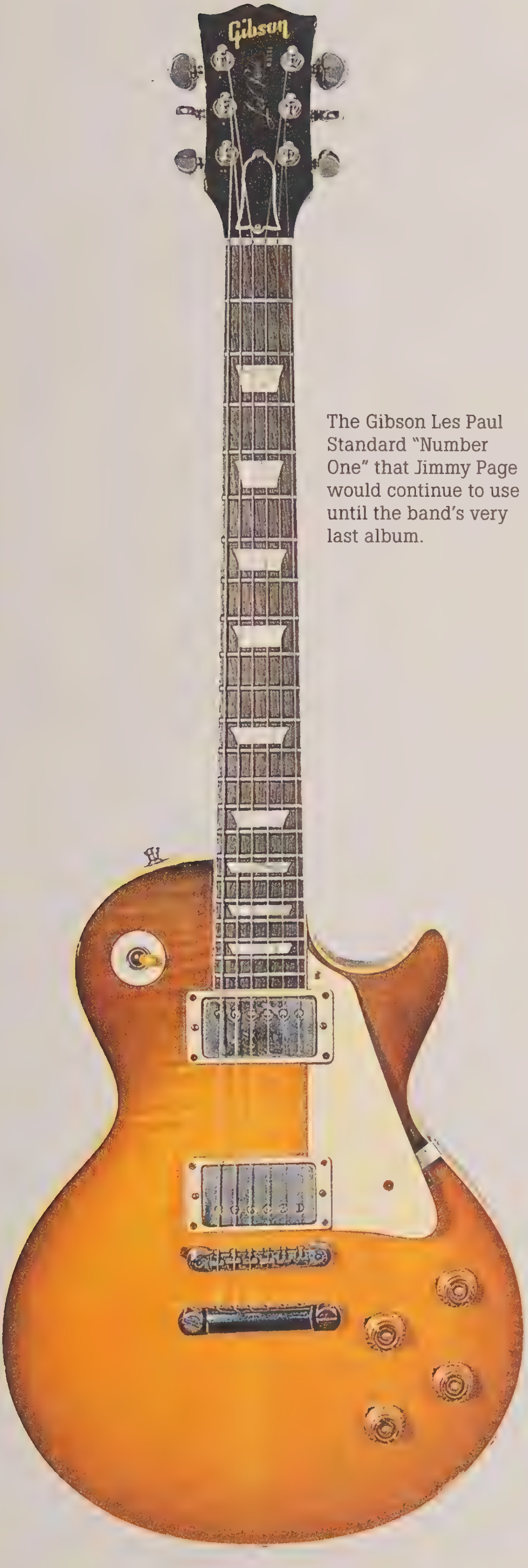
Page also plays a 1967 Vox Phantom XII acquired when he was with the Yardbirds and used on their song "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor." His acoustic guitar is an E-ROS Model 606 Dakota, manufactured in Italy by Fratelli Fuselli.

As for amps, he retains his Supro combo, but also uses a Vox UL4120 (at Olympic) connected to Rickenbacker Transonic Series 200 speaker cabinets, and a 100-watt Marshall 1959SLP "Plexi." On the effects side, he sticks with his Vox Grey Wah and his Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo. Finally, he innovates by trying out the famous Sonic Wave theremin on "Whole Lotta Love."

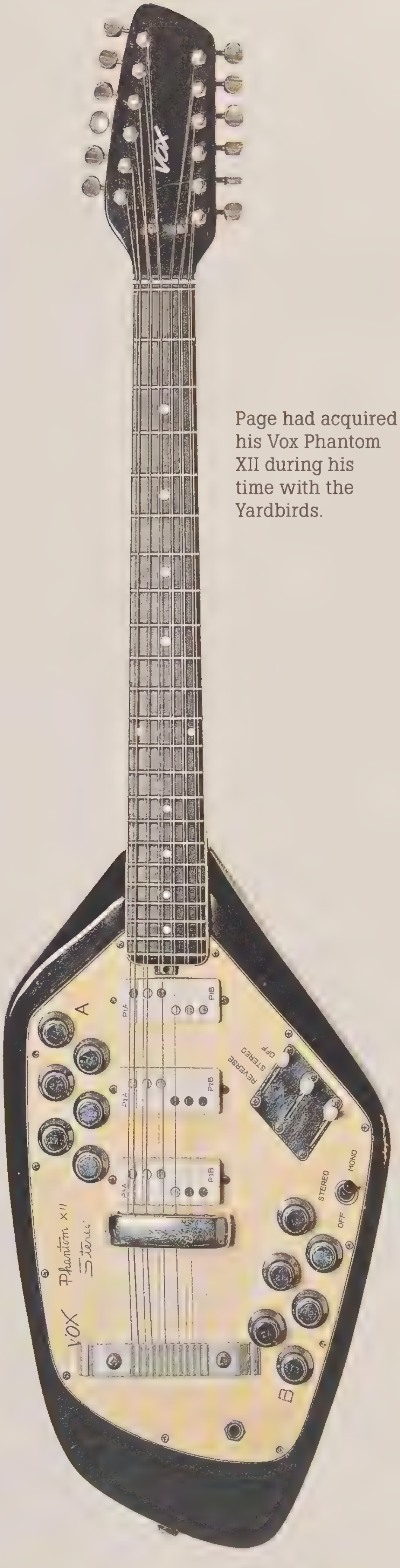
John Paul Jones remains faithful to his 1962 Fender Jazz Bass, which he also, in all likelihood, plays through a Marshall 1959SLP 100-watt amp with Marshall 1982A baffles. It is interesting to note that he combines a direct input into the console with a mic on the amp. He also plays keyboards (a Hammond C-3 organ) on the album, and a bongo part on "Whole Lotta Love."

John Bonham, who was able to get a taste of the quality of the Ludwig "Black Diamond Pearl" kit at the very beginning of the band's first American tour, managed to get a Ludwig endorsement through the intervention of his friend Carmine Appice of Vanilla Fudge. He subsequently took possession of a Ludwig "Natural Maple" kit with double (26x14) bass drums that would not exactly find favor with Jimmy Page. This kit consisted of a Ludwig Supraphonic snare drum, two floor toms (16x16 and 18x16), a medium tom (13 or 14 inches), Paiste cymbals, and a cowbell. He also plays congas, a tambourine (fixed to his drum kit for "Moby Dick"), maracas, and a Paiste Symphonic gong (36 or 38 inches) on the album.

Finally, Robert Plant looks after all the other tambourine parts as well as the harmonica (when not singing).



The Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One" that Jimmy Page would continue to use until the band's very last album.


Vox
Phantom XII
Stereo
VOX

Page had acquired his Vox Phantom XII during his time with the Yardbirds.

Jimmy Page and Leona Lewis gave a performance of "Whole Lotta Love" at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing as part of a foretaste of the London Games. To avoid shocking the prudish sensibilities of the Chinese high officials, certain words had to be slightly modified.

WHOLE LOTTA LOVE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, Willie Dixon / 5:34

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, tambourine
Jimmy Page: guitars, theremin, backing vocals (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, bongos, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, congas, maracas
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 14–19, 1969
A&M Studios, Hollywood, California: April 28–30, 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York City: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: George Chkiantz
Mixing: Eddie Kramer and Jimmy Page

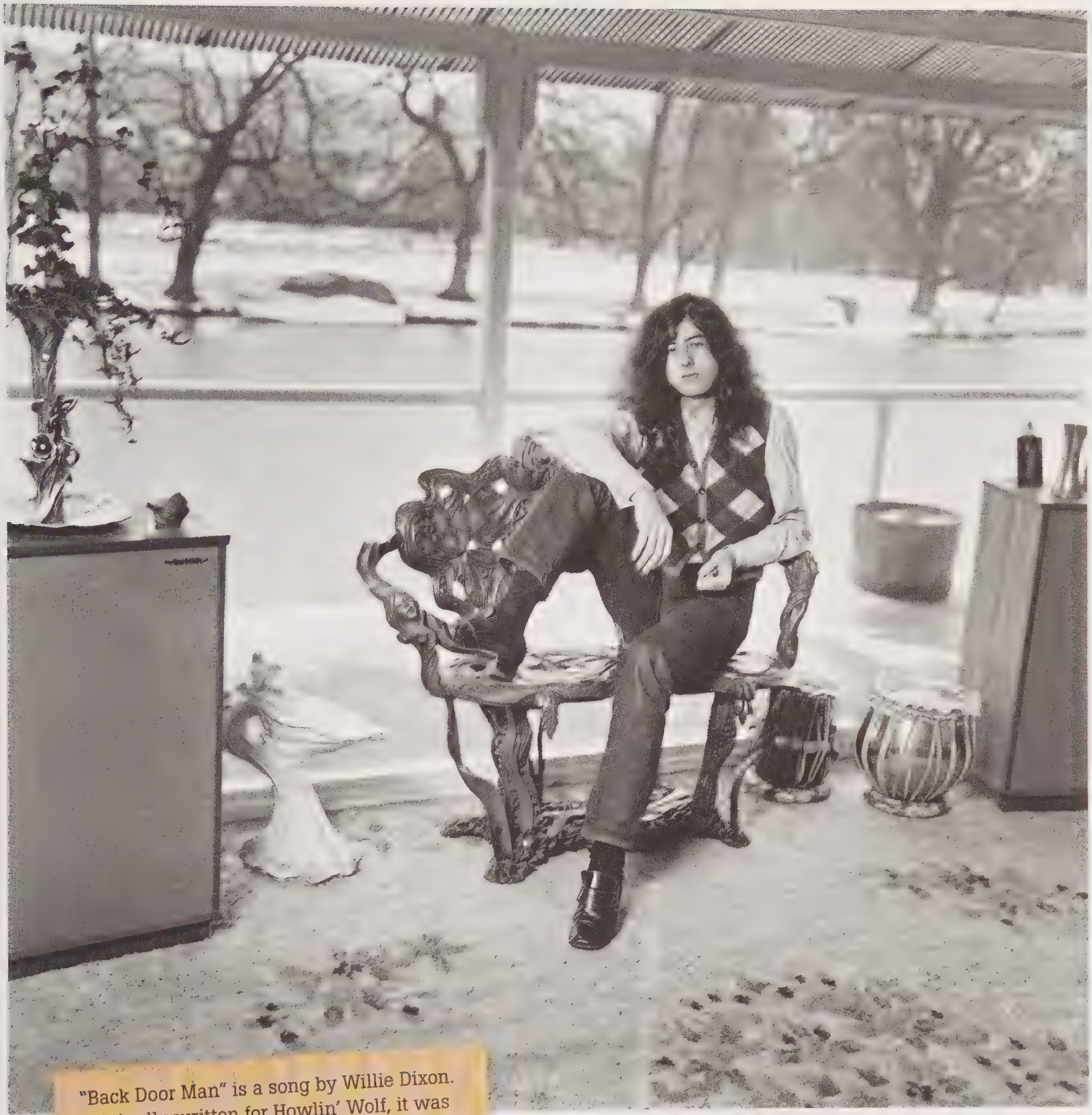
Jimmy Page and Leona Lewis performing "Whole Lotta Love" during the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008.

Genesis

Although originally credited to the four members of Led Zeppelin, "Whole Lotta Love" sprang from an idea by Jimmy Page, who had come up with one of the greatest and most striking riffs in the history of rock music (*the* greatest, according to BBC Radio Two listeners, ahead of "Sweet Child o' Mine" by Guns N' Roses and "Back in Black" by AC/DC). "I came up with the guitar riff for 'Whole Lotta Love' in the summer of '68, on my houseboat along the Thames in Pangbourne, England," explains Page to Marc Myers of the *Wall Street Journal*. "I suppose my early love for big intros by rockabilly guitarists was an inspiration, but as soon as I developed the riff, I knew it was strong enough to drive the entire song, not just open it. When I played the riff for the band in my living room several weeks later during rehearsals for our first album, the excitement was immediate and collective. We felt the riff was addictive, like a forbidden thing."[30]

The song certainly revels in a taste for the forbidden and constitutes a hymn in praise of physical love. *Way down inside, honey, you need it/I'm gonna give you my love*, sings Robert Plant before incanting the phrase *Wanna whole lotta love* in the refrain. He then perhaps addresses women in general—*Way down inside, woman, you need love*—before turning his attention back to his partner: *Shake for me, girl/I wanna be your backdoor man*. The term *backdoor man* is to be understood here as the lover of a married woman (who enters and slips away by the back door, unbeknown to the husband). This is a blues cliché. Meanwhile the instrumental section from 1:18 to 3:02 became known as the "orgasmic" or "freakout" section!

In order to reach the widest possible audience via the AM stations, Atlantic was keen to release "Whole Lotta Love"—recorded under the triple banner of sex, chaos, and heavy rock—as a single in the United States. This met with a categorical refusal from the four members of the group and Peter Grant. Braving the obstacles,



"Back Door Man" is a song by Willie Dixon. Originally written for Howlin' Wolf, it was covered by the Doors on their eponymous debut album (1967).

It was at home in Pangbourne, by the River Thames, that Jimmy Page came up with one of the most famous riffs in the history of rock.

certain radio stations began to air the song with the middle instrumental section excised (in order to limit it to the sacrosanct three-minute play time), thereby provoking an immediate reaction from Atlantic. On November 7, 1969, the record company launched a promotional single intended for the exclusive use of the media with the long version on side A and a shortened version, running to 3:12, on side B (in other words without the "orgasmic" section). Some copies of the short version had been released commercially despite the band's disapproval and were rapidly withdrawn from sale.

The original track, with "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" as the B-side, was duly released for sale in the United States, Australia, Japan, and a number of European countries (including France, West Germany, and Belgium), and became a colossal hit. Within five weeks of its release, the single had sold a million copies in the United States alone. "Whole Lotta Love" reached number 1 on the

Led Zeppelin at the Kinetic Playground in Chicago in May 1969, during their second American tour.

Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love" is not without a certain resemblance to "You Need Loving" by the Small Faces (shown here in 1966).

Shirley Dixon is the former head of the Blues Heaven Foundation, which her father Willie created in 1982. The foundation's mission is to recover the infringed rights and royalties of blues artists and to support young musicians. Since 1993, the foundation has been based at the former Chess Studios at 2120 South Michigan Avenue.

Billboard chart on December 6, 1969, and topped the charts in Australia and West Germany, while reaching number 2 in Canada, Belgium, and Denmark.

Litigation

Robert Plant, who wrote the lyrics to this exhortation to physical rapture, took some of his words from "You Need Love," a blues by Willie Dixon that Muddy Waters recorded in 1962. *Way down inside, honey, you need it/I'm gonna give you my love* and *You've been learnin', baby, I've been yearnin'* in the Led Zeppelin song; *Baby, way down inside, woman you need love* and *You've got yearnin' and I got burnin'* in Dixon's. Similarly, the Small Faces' track "You Need Loving" (1966) also bears a certain resemblance to "You Need Love." The various unequivocal phrases sung by Steve Marriott in the song include: *I ain't foolin', woman, you need coolin'* and *way down inside your heart, woman, you need lovin'.*

At the beginning of the nineteen eighties (he would claim not to have heard the song before his daughter Shirley told him about it), Willie Dixon filed a lawsuit against Led Zeppelin, claiming that "Whole Lotta Love" was plagiarized from "You Need Love." Following an out-of-court settlement, the bluesman's name was added to the credit alongside those of the four members of the group. Jimmy Page later commented in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Some people said later that 'Whole Lotta Love' was based on Willie Dixon's 'You Need Love' [recorded by Muddy Waters] and the Small Faces' 'You Need Loving.' My riff—the basis for the entire song—sounds nothing like either of them. Robert had referenced the Dixon lyrics because with my riff, they felt right. This eventually forced us to give Dixon a co-credit on our song. But if you take Robert's vocal out, there's no musical reference to either song."[30]

Production

Jimmy Page is no doubt entirely sincere when he claims his riff was an authentic creation. His subconscious may nevertheless have retained a phrase or hook from another piece of music. This can happen to any artist. If this is, in fact, the case, the notes Page picked up may have been the short phrase that occurs on Tim Rose's cover of "Hey Joe" and on the better-known version by

Léon Theremin and his brilliant invention, which, against all expectations, would make waves in rock (as well as in classical) music.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

John Bonham invested enormous energy in his drumming and sometimes felt a need to spur himself on with shouts and groans. An example can be heard on "Whole Lotta Love" at 3:41, where a long moan can be heard underneath Robert Plant's vocal!

Jimi Hendrix, the phrase repeated by Hendrix every six bars (for example at 0:15). They share the same tonality and the same rhythmic articulation. As a true creative artist, however, and supposing this hypothesis to be correct, Page has completely remodeled the phrase, turning it into the incredible riff we know today, which no longer owes anything to anyone.

"Whole Lotta Love" begins with Robert Plant laughing, a positive way of opening the album. Jimmy Page then immediately launches into the riff possibly with his Gibson Les Paul with plenty of fuzz and reverb. As Olympic Studios had been booked from April 14 to 19, Page had just taken possession of the Gibson Les Paul he would buy from Joe Walsh. Photos from the sessions show him plugged into a Vox UL4120 amp playing through Rickenbacker Transonic (Series 200) speaker cabinets, a combination almost certainly responsible for the distorted guitar sound. He is joined virtually straightaway by John Paul Jones with his terrific, powerful, and percussive bass, which also has a slight fuzz. The bassist would later explain that he used a pick to play simultaneous octaves on the instrument's two lowest strings, which explains how he obtained his firm, precise sound. This take results in all likelihood from the bassist recording from his amp while at the same time plugging directly into the console.

Robert Plant comes in after a few bars. His voice is magnificent and crackles with energy. What's more, he recorded his part in a single take! However, if we compare Plant's performance with Steve Marriott's in the Small Faces' "You Need Loving," there is no escaping the fact that the Led Zeppelin singer has been enormously inspired by Marriott's extraordinary phrasing (to say nothing of the words). Marriott would not fail to observe that "Percy" Plant had been a fan of the group in his younger years, commenting with a certain fatalism that: "He sang it the same, phrased it the same, even the stops at the end were the same, they just put a different rhythm to it."[31] Nevertheless, this takes nothing away from Plant's performance. As "Whole Lotta Love" unfolds he proves himself to be one of the best of all rock singers, and would become a model and an inspiration for hard-rock bands—of every persuasion—everywhere.

John Bonham does not make his entrance until thirty-three seconds into the track, just in time to launch the refrain. What can be said about his drumming other than that it is exceptional? Instead of simply laying down a heavy, straightforward beat, Bonham introduces a real swing into his playing, which meshes perfectly with Page's riff, transforming his drum kit into nothing less than a groove machine. And this is helped by George Chkiantz's masterstroke of placing him on a rostrum. As a highly shrewd producer, Jimmy Page had wanted to foreground Bonham's extraordinary playing and make him one of the pivots of the song.

In the refrain, Page plays a descending phrase recorded during the overdub sessions at A&M Studios in Hollywood between April 28 and 30. He used his newly acquired 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard "with a metal slide and backwards echo"[18] (he would reveal to Steve Rosen in 1977) and fuzz from the Tone Bender, although some sources have him playing his Les Paul Custom "Black Beauty," contradicting Page's own recollections. The sound pans from left to right, creating the impression of a plane taking off. Meanwhile, Plant doubles his voice and is also apparently assisted by his bandmates.

Diabolical Sonorities

After another verse and refrain, we arrive at the famous "freakout" sequence that is the crux of the piece. "I

always envisioned the middle to be quite avant-garde,"[15] the guitarist has revealed. This section is launched by Bonham marking each beat on his hi-hat (from 1:19) with very present reverb. He can be heard increasing rapidly in volume, taking a central place in the overall texture. Bonzo strikes the bells of his cymbals before the other percussion instruments join him (from 1:31 in the right-hand channel). A photograph taken at A&M Studios shows Jones on bongos, Plant on tambourine (although he doesn't play it in this particular passage), and Bonham on congas. The atmosphere skillfully orchestrated by Jimmy Page is unreal, dreamlike, disturbing: "I needed Bonzo to really stand out, so that every stick stroke sounded clear and you could really feel them,"[29] the guitarist explains.

From 1:44, virtually unidentifiable sounds suddenly emerge, only to be buffeted around the stereo field. Page explains: "I created most of the sounds with a Theremin and my guitar. The Theremin generates most of higher pitches and my Les Paul makes the lower sounds."[15] It seems the guitarist had the idea of using the theremin after seeing Randy California, of the group Spirit, playing one in concert, and also enjoying it in the chorus of the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" from 1966. Invented by the Russian Lev Sergeyevich Termen, better known as Léon Theremin, the instrument is a kind of oscillator that responds to movements of the hands between its two antennae. Page bought a Sonic Wave theremin and lost no time in experimenting with it at the A&M Studios. To increase the strangeness of the sound even further, he adds a delay obtained from his Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo. As for the low frequencies generated by his Gibson, these he achieves by somewhat unorthodox means: "I detuned it and pulled on the strings for a far-out effect," he explains to journalist Marc Myers. "I was playing a Sunburst 1958 [editorial note: 1959] Les Paul Standard guitar I had bought from [the James Gang guitarist] Joe Walsh in San Francisco when we were out there on tour. The Standard had this tonal versatility, allowing me to get a blistering high pitch."[29] Clearly the sounds Page produces on the guitar here, however, are moaning bass sonorities, in his own words (uttered with a degree of

irony), "[…] evil sounds that you're not supposed to hear on commercial radio."[15]

Alongside the guitarist, Robert Plant competes with his bandmate vocally, aiming for the highest notes and producing some extremely suggestive passages (hence the nickname "orgasmic" section). Jimmy Page would later explain that he had gained in confidence during the recording and was operating at the very limit of his potential. Listening to the results, there seems to be no reason to doubt this…Finally, after an impressive deluge of different effects, including reverb, pre-echo, delay, wild panning, low-frequency oscillators (thanks to Eddie Kramer's technical expertise), and astonishing individual performances, John Bonham concludes this long avant-garde interlude (lasting more than 1:45) by rapping out a tattoo on his snare drum and toms and catapulting Jimmy Page into an extraordinary guitar solo that must count as one of the best of his career (from 3:05). The notes literally explode from his Les Paul—aggressive, precise, and dense. The guitarist gives a brilliant demonstration of both his talent for improvisation and his formidable technique, his string bends, bends with vibrato, exceptional touch, and unrivaled feeling and phrasing marking him as one of the biggest guitar heroes of his time.

This solo is followed by another verse and refrain. Plant adds a tambourine, and Bonham maracas (both on the right). At 3:59 there is a vocal break, where Robert Plant sings a cappella in a voice that has a simultaneously soul

Robert Plant delivering his apology for physical—rather than spiritual—love in "Whole Lotta Love."

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

By diktat of Peter Grant, "Whole Lotta Love" was never released as a single in the United Kingdom until 1997, when it was issued to celebrate Led Zeppelin's thirtieth anniversary. Also on the CD are "Baby Come On Home" and "Travelling Riverside Blues." Led Zeppelin's legendary track peaked at number 21 on the British charts.

COVERS

"Whole Lotta Love" has been the subject of many and varied covers. That by Alexis Korner's CCS (Collective Consciousness Society, on *CCS*, 1970) was used as the theme music to the BBC's *Top of the Pops* from 1970 to 1977 and from 1998 to 2003—despite Led Zeppelin never having appeared on the show! Also worthy of mention are Tina Turner (*Acid Queen*, 1975), Jimmy Page and the Black Crowes (*Live at the Greek*, 2000), and Mary J. Blige (on the US iTunes version of *Stronger with Each Tear*, 2009).

and a rock feel and displays impressive power and pitch. Behind his lead vocal can be heard a distant echo of his voice, drenched in reverb. Eddie Kramer explains that while mixing the number with Jimmy Page at A&R Studios in New York, they were surprised to discover that an earlier vocal take had bled onto the other tracks and was impossible to delete! "Once Jimmy and I realized we had to live with it on the master," recalls Kramer, "I looked at Jimmy, he looked at me, and we both reached for the reverb knob at the same time and cracked up laughing. Our instincts were the same—to douse the faint, intruding voice in reverb so it sounded part of the master plan."[29]

To arrive at the end result, Kramer and Page rehearsed what they were going to do, with each of them looking after a section of the eight-track console, adjusting and monitoring the levels, panning, and reverb. Naturally there was no automation back then, and listening to the perfection of the mix today, who could fail to admire their prowess and the brilliance of their achievement.

In truth, the piece could have been mixed as early as May, all the overdubs for "Whole Lotta Love" having been completed by then. But Jimmy Page wanted to wait until August so that Eddie Kramer could take care of it as "it needed a big, polished mix for the album."[29] With "Whole Lotta Love," Jimmy Page gives a brilliant demonstration of his exceptional qualities as a musician and producer alongside his three equally amazing bandmates.

April 1969. Jimmy Page on his new Gibson Les Paul in the process of recording "What Is and What Should Never Be" at Olympic Studios.

WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:44

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars, backing vocals (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, gong
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 14–19, 1969
Groove Studios, New York: June 1, 1969
Juggy Sound Studio, New York: June 2, 1969 (?)
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: George Chkiantz, Eddie Kramer
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

"What Is and What Should Never Be" was included in Led Zeppelin's set lists from 1969 to 1972. A superb version can be enjoyed on the DVD *Led Zeppelin*, recorded at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

To coincide with the 2016 release of *The Complete BBC Sessions*, which contains three different versions of "What Is and What Should Never Be" (*Tasty Pop Sundae* June 22, 1969; *Top Gear*, June 29, 1969; and Paris Theatre, London, April 1, 1971), an animated video was made to accompany the song.

Genesis

"What Is and What Should Never Be" is the first composition to be credited to Jimmy Page–Robert Plant, and the first that properly bears the singer's stamp. *And if I say to you tomorrow, take my hand, child, come with me/It's to a castle I will take you.* Here we encounter another facet of Robert Plant's character, the romantic soul attracted by the simultaneously magical and disturbing world of heroic fantasy and the gothic novel.

Delving further into this song, whose title hints at something illicit, may well encapsulate some conflicting feelings on the part of the Led Zeppelin singer around this time. After being married to Maureen Wilson for just a few months, is it possible that Robert Plant may not have been immune to the charms of his young sister-in-law Shirley? This being the case, the castle could be an allegory of a clandestine, forbidden love. This is mere speculation, Robert Plant never really having expressed himself on the subject. However, years after he and Maureen divorced (1982), the singer had a son with her sister Shirley (1991).

Production

Although the track is performed entirely on electric, Jimmy Page has revealed that he composed "What Is and What Should Never Be" on his Harmony Sovereign H1260, an acoustic guitar from his Yardbirds days. Led Zeppelin recorded most of the track at Olympic Studios between April 14 and 19—on April 18 they were playing a gig at the New York University Jazz Festival. Robert Plant opens the second track on the album a cappella, singing in a gentle, sensual voice colored by highly distinctive phrasing and a discreet but effective delay. The group joins in right away, Jimmy Page accompanying the singer with strummed chords on his Les Paul. The clear-toned guitar alternates between two chords with a somewhat jazzy harmony (A 7/6 and E 7/9). John Bonham follows suit with some light and airy work

centering on his ride cymbal. Meanwhile, John Paul Jones delivers an excellent bass line apparently recorded by means of a direct input into the console. His accompaniment is simultaneously melodic and rhythmic, providing his bandmates with valuable support.

The hard-edged, hot-tempered refrain provides a harsh contrast with the peaceful, dreamlike opening. Plant regains his extraordinary voice—strained and powerful—of before, doubling and harmonizing with himself. Page now plays a rhythm part with distortion from his Tone Bender (or perhaps from the Vox UL4120 amp that was available at Olympic), Bonham, with disconcerting ease, combines dynamism with a certain swing, while Jones supports him with some very sustained bass. The end of the refrain transitions into a Beach Boys–like passage with airy and melodic vocal harmonies nicely enhanced by the studio's superb EMT plate reverb.

Following a second verse/refrain sequence, Jimmy Page plays a delicate solo with bottleneck in standard tuning. According to CD2 of the deluxe edition, this solo was recorded at Olympic Studios. He could have been using his Dragon Telecaster still, although the sound he produces brings to mind his 1959 Gibson Les Paul. As some photos attest, it could have been on of the earliest recordings with that guitar. Either way, his performance is superb. His slide playing is masterful, and he displays a remarkable sense of melody. In the hard-rock section he plays bluesy licks and wraps up his solo with a long descending bottleneck slide.

A final verse and refrain set follows before the track explodes in a furious, reverb-drenched riff. The sound is distorted and alternates between the right and left channels. Bonham strikes the gong mightily at 3:37 (and again at 3:44). The track draws to a close with a very rocky, almost funky coda with Plant improvising. Bonzo gets into a remarkable groove with some stunning work on bass drum (he can also be heard striking the metal rim of his snare drum from 4:35), while Page and Jones take care of the main riff. Some of the guitar overdubs were probably recorded at Juggy Sound Studio in New York on June 2, with the guitarist, as always, directing the placement of the mics with great care: "Instead of going right up against the griller I'd put mics in the back of the amps, and way out in the room as well – you can really hear that at the end of 'What Is and What Should Never Be.'"[32]

THE LEMON SONG

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, Chester Burnett / 6:18

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, gong
Recorded
Mystic Sound Studios, Hollywood, California: May 4–5, 1969
A&M Studios, Hollywood, California: August 5, 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Chris Huston, Eddie Kramer (?)
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

Delta blues master Robert Johnson, from whom Robert Plant borrowed a number of evocative phrases for "The Lemon Song."

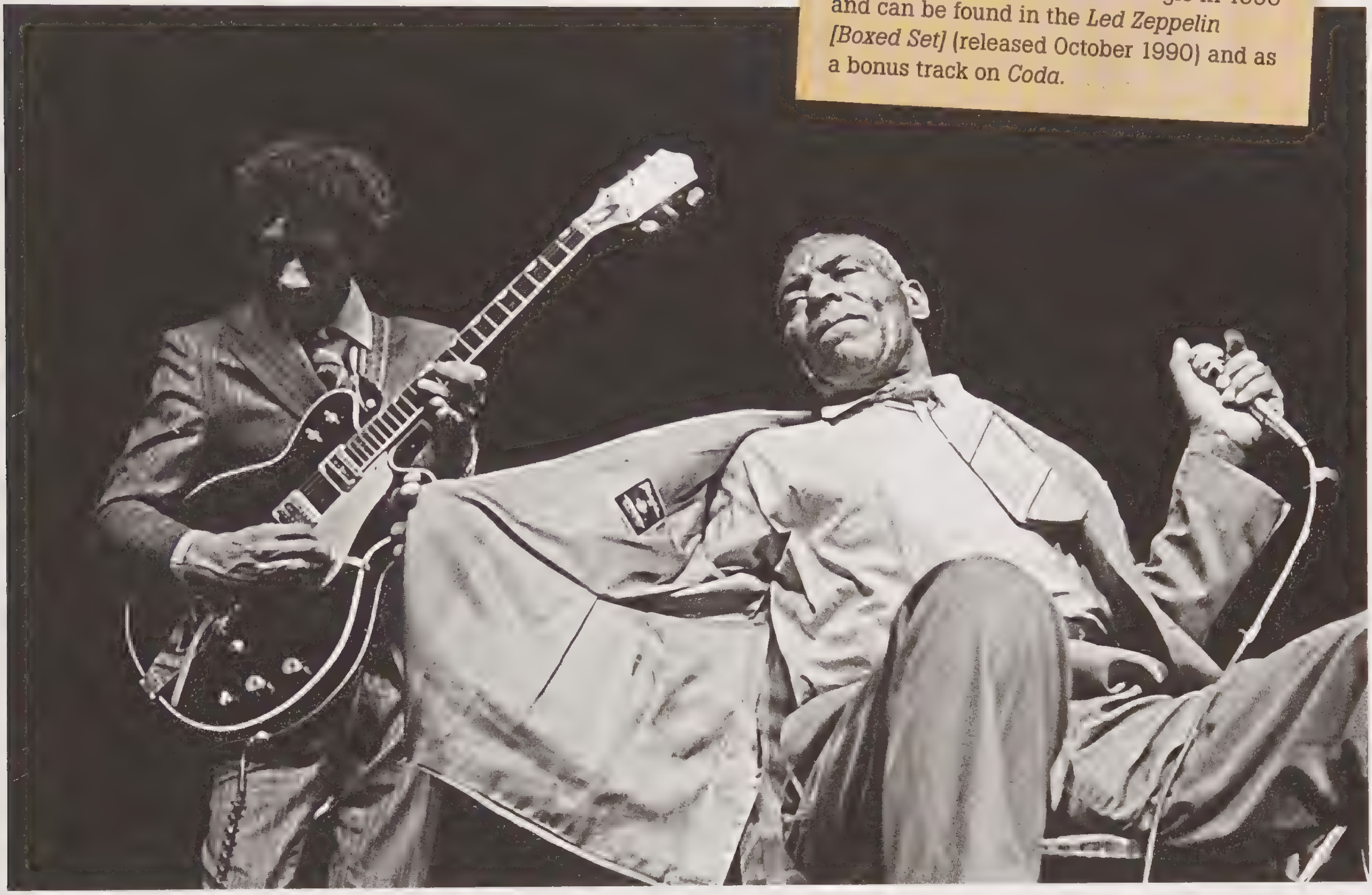
Genesis

During the North American tour of summer 1969—with Robert Plant's improvisation of new words—"Killing Floor" by Howlin' Wolf (real name Chester Burnett) was transformed into "The Lemon Song." Howlin' Wolf had recorded "Killing Floor" at Chess Studios in 1964, with Hubert Sumlin (guitar), Buddy Guy (acoustic guitar), Lafayette Leake (piano), Arnold Rogers (tenor sax), Donald Hankins (baritone sax), Andrew McMahon (bass), and Sam Lay (drums). In it he expresses on the one hand an unfulfilled desire for vengeance and on the other terrible regrets: *I should a quit you, long time ago*, and then: *Lord knows, I should a been gone/And I wouldn't a been here, down on the killing floor.*

In "The Lemon Song" the four members of Led Zeppelin take their turn to point the finger at the deceitful, unfaithful woman who torments her lover. *I bring home my money, you take my money, you give it to another man*, sings Robert Plant. Despite this woman being the cause of all his disillusion and suffering, the lover is so crazy about her that he ignores the advice of his friends: *People tell me baby can't keep me satisfied* [...] *but they never hurt you in my eyes.*

The inspiration of Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham for this song does not come from Howlin' Wolf alone, however. Appropriating the traditional double entendre from the founding fathers of the blues, they adopt some particularly evocative phrases, such as *Squeeze me, baby, till the juice runs down my legs*, which Robert Johnson had sung in "Travelling Riverside Blues," in order to show how sexual frustration can be responsible for many an ill. "I think that was poetry at one time,"[20] says Robert Plant. And the singer himself carries the torrid metaphor further: *The way you squeeze my lemon, I'm gonna fall right out of bed.* It is also interesting to note that the pianist Roosevelt Sykes sang a blues called "She Squeezed My Lemon" the same year as Robert Johnson.

"Travelling Riverside Blues" was recorded by Robert Johnson in Dallas, Texas, on June 20, 1937. Led Zeppelin recorded a version of it at the BBC (Aeolian Hall) on June 20, 1969. This version, to which Jimmy Page subsequently added guitar overdubs, was released as a single in 1990 and can be found in the *Led Zeppelin [Boxed Set]* (released October 1990) and as a bonus track on *Coda*.



Howlin' Wolf, Led Zeppelin's major influence in "The Lemon Song," with his guitarist Hubert Sumlin.

Production

Clearly "The Lemon Song" finds itself at the crossroads of multiple influences. In the opening riff, played by Jimmy Page, we find the influence of Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor," as we have already seen, certain sonorities from Jimi Hendrix's "Foxy Lady," elements that recall the Yardbirds, Cream, and so on. But to whom can we attribute the blues progressions themselves, all of which derive from reciprocal interactions?

It is Jimmy Page, then, who opens the track (in the left-hand channel), accompanied by a powerful strike of the gong by John Bonham—who seems to have acquired quite a taste for the instrument since using it on "What Is and What Should Never Be." The guitar sound is distorted, live, "dirty." Some sources have Page playing his Dragon Telecaster still, plugged into his Supro amp. Others claim he is using his 1959 Les Paul Standard. It is difficult to say. Either way, he is using his Vox Grey Wah to take the edge off the high frequencies and obtain a more nasal tone color. After four bars of the guitar riff, Bonham and Jones join in, supporting Page with some simple, subtle playing with that underlying groove that is characteristic of this rhythm section. Plant's lead vocal gives "The Lemon Song" a curiously live feel, and this is confirmed by Chris Huston, the sound engineer at Mystic Sound Studios: "The sessions came out great. Jimmy was very easy to get on with. We did the tracks live, with Plant standing in the middle of the room with a hand-held microphone [most probably a Shure Unidyne IV 548SD]."[27] Moreover the short reverb coloring the

John Paul Jones playing his Fender Jazz Bass, on which he distinguishes himself in particular on "The Lemon Song."

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Following a lawsuit for plagiarism, the title "The Lemon Song" was simply replaced by "Killing Floor" for the second pressing of the LP, and credited to Burnett alone. The intended title was later reinstated, but continued to carry a Burnett credit.

Sound engineer Chris Huston began his career playing for the Undertakers, a Liverpool band that in 1962 found itself playing Hamburg's famous Star Club, one of the Beatles' early residencies. When Brian Epstein, manager of the Fab Four, offered to take on the Undertakers, the lesser-known band from Liverpool did not have the foresight to accept…

singer's voice is simply the natural reverb of the room. And the group's performance is all the more remarkable for being recorded in one take (other than the guitar overdubs).

"The Lemon Song" comprises two different blocks of material: a bluesy first section, of moderate tempo (around 89 bpm), and a second section that is faster (approximately 148 bpm) and has more of a rock feel. On August 5, not long before the final mixing of the album, on the twenty-ninth and thirtieth of that month, Jimmy Page recorded a number of different solos for this second section at A&M Studios in Hollywood. This time he is definitely playing his new Les Paul, which he colors with a slight delay (Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo) and positions on the right of the stereo field. The guitarist comes up with some lightning-fast solo work, his fingers darting feverishly up and down the fingerboard with that extraordinary feeling we have come to expect of him. Although his solos can occasionally be a little untidy, especially onstage, there is none of that here. The first of these solos begins at 1:27 and the second at 4:36.

However, "The Lemon Song" would not be what it is—a track of unique quality—without John Paul Jones's superb bass line. Jones distinguishes himself above all in the central segment of the song, introduced (from 2:58) by Robert Plant with an incredible cry of *Babe!* The atmosphere is hushed, with Plant's high-octane vocals accompanied by the rhythm section alone. Bonham generates a formidable groove, and Jones accompanies him with an inspired walking-bass part on his Fender Jazz Bass. Knowing this was recorded in a single take, and moreover "live," the listener cannot help but admire. John Paul Jones is a largely underestimated bassist, no doubt because of his introverted character, but Led Zeppelin could not have functioned without him—or, for that matter, without any other single member of the group. It is over this fabulous rhythm section that Jimmy Page in turn enters, at first timidly, with various effects, swamped in a delay with repetitions worthy of David Gilmour (listen to the left channel at 3:11 or 3:18) and then with a very good bluesy solo played on his Gibson from 4:36 (right-hand channel). His phrasing is incredible and his technique impeccable. Guitar, bass, and drums: in this passage the three Zeppelin instrumentalists prove themselves to be absolutely unique, and in possession of a fearsome command of the groove.

"The Lemon Song" ends with the voice of Robert Plant. Additional proof that the track was recorded in one entirely live take is provided by the last word he sings, which is repeated by means of a delay added at the time of the take, rather than in subsequent mixing as is customary (listen at 6:11). Chris Huston confirms this: "You can hear that at the end of 'The Lemon Song,' where Plant sings 'Floor, floor, floor'—that echo was recorded in real time."[27]

It was with "Thank You," a song dedicated to his wife, Maureen (shown with him here), that Robert Plant is believed to have made his debut as Led Zeppelin's lyricist.

THANK YOU

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:47

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric and acoustic guitars, vocal harmonies
John Paul Jones: bass, organ
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Morgan Studios, London: June 25, 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The phrases *If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you* and *When mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me* were probably inspired by Jimi Hendrix's song "If 6 Was 9" (on the album *Axis: Bold as Love*, 1967): *If the sun refused to shine, I don't mind, I don't mind/If the mountains fell in the sea, let it be, it ain't me*. And also, presumably, by Ben E. King's "Stand By Me," written in 1961: *And the mountains should crumble in the sea.*

Genesis

"Thank You" is believed to be the first song to have lyrics penned for Led Zeppelin by Robert Plant. If we suppose (as we can with near certainty) that the subject of "What Is and What Should Never Be" is the singer's relationship with his sister-in-law Shirley Wilson, "Thank You" is undoubtedly an ode to his wife Maureen, whom he married on November 9, 1968. "It took a lot of ribbing and teasing to actually get him into writing," says Jimmy, "which was funny. And then, on the second LP, he wrote the words of 'Thank You.' He said, 'I'd like to have a crack at this and write it for my wife.'"[11]

Like Robert Plant, Maureen Wilson was born in West Bromwich, but her parents were from Goa, on the southeastern coast of India, her father later taking up the position of police chief in Calcutta. Robert and Maureen met at a Georgie Fame concert in 1966, and it was love at first sight.

John Crutchley, a guitarist from Walsall and a long-standing friend of Robert Plant (he was in a West Bromwich–based band with the future Led Zeppelin singer), told Paul Rees: "Maureen was good for Robert, and he couldn't have wished for a better family because they took him under their wing. He stayed at Trinity Road quite a lot, among all the comings and goings there. I fancied Maureen's younger sister, Shirley, and the four of us used to go about together. It was a nice, cozy scene."[2]

"Thank You" is the expression of a love felt all the more strongly for being evoked by Robert Plant on tour, far from the family he had started (by that time he was father to little Carmen Jane, born on October 21, 1968), a love that inspired in him a desire not to continually give in to temptation, to the charms of the groupies, starting with the GTOs: *If the sun refused to shine, I would still be loving you/When the mountains crumble to the sea, there will still be you and me*, he sings. And: *Together we shall go until we die.* "Thank You," or "Robert and Maureen Forever"!

Her
4

Robert Plant, more of a sex symbol than ever, with Jimmy Page on his Gibson Les Paul. The mystique of Led Zeppelin…

COVERS

Fred Durst, of Limp Bizkit, and Wes Scantlin, of Puddle of Mudd, performed "Thank You" alongside Jimmy Page at the 2001 MTV Europe Music Awards. Tori Amos recorded it for her US EP *Crucify* (which also includes "Angie" by the Rolling Stones and "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana).

Production

"Thank You" marked the start of a long and fruitful collaboration between Led Zeppelin and the chief sound engineer at Morgan Studios, Andy Johns (the brother of Glyn, who had engineered the quartet's debut album). The track was cut in a day, June 25, indicating that the group was on form and brimming with confidence. Jimmy Page opens "Thank You" with an intro on electric guitar, a 1967 Vox Phantom XII twelve-string acquired during his Yardbirds days. The sound is strongly reminiscent of the Byrds, all the more so as he doubles the instrument with an acoustic guitar, his E-ROS Model 606 Dakota, with its more crystalline sound. John Paul Jones has moved back behind the keyboard and provides an accompaniment on Hammond C-3 organ (with a slight delay added at mixing stage). There is something of a psychedelic atmosphere, although the characteristic Led Zep spirit is restored as soon as John Bonham comes in, engaging in abundant tom work. After a few bars, and accompanied by Hammond organ, Robert Plant comes in sweetly and gently, just as he does on "What Is and What Should Never Be." His performance speaks of a certain, more or less unexpected, vulnerability that is at odds with the hard-rock image of the four Englishmen. The track acquires a new dynamism after the first verse, Bonham and Jones falling into a pop-like groove at the limits of slow rock. Page plays his Vox Phantom and also adds a strummed acoustic, supported by the rich vibrato of the Hammond. There may also be an electric rhythm guitar contributing to the overall sound. Between 1:05 and 1:27 a rare instance occurs of Jimmy Page harmonizing with Robert Plant. The voices are not perfectly in sync and the tuning is not without one or two issues, but the result is enjoyable without exactly setting the world on fire. An instrumental bridge follows that is really a reprise of the intro. Page then launches into a solo on his E-ROS Dakota. The acoustic is positioned in the middle of the mix, with the frequencies of the guitar difficult to hear. This is not one of Jimmy's best performances. This does not stop us from appreciating the excellent support provided by the Bonham-Jones team, however, the latter developing a bass line with clear Motown influences. After Robert Plant's voice returns, the piece ends with an extended organ passage, lasting more than a minute, played by John Paul Jones on the C-3. This is punctuated every three bars by a guitar chord and bass note. The mood is curiously reminiscent of Pink Floyd's "Cirrus Minor" released in June 1969. One peculiarity of the track is that it starts to fade out from 4:05 before then fading back in from 4:30! This was no doubt designed to fool radio program planners, who were indeed caught out by this original touch.

Ultimately, "Thank You" is a fairly atypical number in the Led Zeppelin catalog, its romantic side appealing to loving couples, many of whom would tie the knot to it.

HEARTBREAKER

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham / 4:14

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
A&R Studios, New York: May 21, 1969
Atlantic Studios, New York: July 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Douglass
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

Genesis

"Heartbreaker" is credited to the four members of the group. It is the story of a femme fatale, Annie, who has broken the protagonist's heart. She suddenly returns after many years' absence, giving him a considerable shock. *Her style is new but the face is the same*, sings Robert Plant. Here he is confronted with her again: *People talking all around about the way you left me flat*, but he immediately adds, *I don't care what the people say*. And he remembers, because the scar has never healed: *If you can clarify, please do, it's the way you call me another guy's name when I try to make love to you*. His conclusion is entirely logical: *Go away, heartbreaker…*

The special place "Heartbreaker" occupies for numerous Led Zeppelin fans and for the music press is apparently due less to the lyrics, which are very much in the "sufferings of love" tradition, than to the music, especially Jimmy Page's unaccompanied guitar solo. The first track on side two of the LP currently lies at number 328 in *Rolling Stone's* famous list of the five hundred greatest songs of all time, while *Guitar World* puts the solo at number 16.

"Heartbreaker" was released as a single in a number of countries, notably Italy (with "Bring It On Home" as the B-side) and South Africa (with "Living Loving Maid [She's Just a Woman]" on the flip side). In the early seventies Led Zeppelin used to perform the song regularly as a concert opener before going straight into "Immigrant Song."

Production

"Heartbreaker" is first and foremost a riff. Jimmy Page launches straight into it on his 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard and doubles his guitar to lend it more weight. His guitar blasts out in stereo, the sound powerful, edgy, heavy, and distorted. The identity of the amp he uses remains a subject of debate to this day: Page has mentioned a Marshall, while other people, including a certain

Sound engineer Jimmy Douglass, who worked on "Heartbreaker" at the Atlantic Recording Studios in New York.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Performing "Heartbreaker" onstage has afforded Jimmy Page an opportunity to improvise on a number of well-known themes, including "Greensleeves" and Bach's Bourrée in E Minor.

Dan Torres, who was apparently present when the track was being recorded, claim it was a Rickenbacker Transonic TR200, with the distortion caused by the poor state it was in. It is difficult to verify, particularly as Jimmy has a reputation for saturating the input of preamps, consoles, and so on. Either way, his riff is incredibly effective and opens the track with brio. After playing one two-bar phrase by himself, he is joined by John Bonham and John Paul Jones. Bonham, as always, attacks his Ludwig kit heavily, creating a steady groove and playing incredible triplets on his bass drum. Unfortunately, the recording fails to do justice to the subtleties of his playing, and the sound is not as big as on the album's other tracks. Jones shadows Page's Les Paul on his Jazz Bass, his sound powerful and unfamiliar. The tone is fuzzy and metallic, and colored by a mild tremolo. As with Page, there is no information about the equipment Jones used. Some sources claim he is plugged into the Hammond organ's Leslie speaker via the Tone Bender, others that he is playing through the Rickenbacker Transonic TR200, which, again, is generating the distortion as a result of its antiquity. Furthermore, the Transonic has integrated tremolo, one of the characteristics of Jones's bass sound on this track. What can be said for certain is that he is using a pick to obtain his metallic tone (lending him almost the same color as Yes bassist Chris Squire's Rickenbacker 4001!) and the gritty feel to his playing.

In his lead vocal for "Heartbreaker," Robert Plant serves as a role model for heavy metal singers: he is powerful, high-pitched, and 100 percent rock. With this track he lays down the canons of the genre. His voice has been colored with a reasonably short reverb and is slightly recessed in the mix.

The third verse undergoes a harmonic progression consisting of three single-tone key changes. This both increases the tension and skillfully introduces the central section of the song, which takes the form of an unaccompanied solo from Jimmy Page. From 2:03 to 2:49 it is just the guitarist and his Les Paul. The idea of introducing forty-six seconds of solo guitar in the middle of a rock track was more or less unique. "I just fancied doing it," explains Page. "I was always trying to do something different, or something that no one else had thought of. But the interesting thing about that solo is that it was recorded

The four members of Led Zeppelin at Chateau Marmont, 8221 Sunset Boulevard, a Baroque-style hotel whose history is closely intertwined with that of rock 'n' roll.

Eddie Van Halen, the guitarist of the California hard-rock band Van Halen, learned a lot from listening to Jimmy Page.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Eddie Van Halen has described how he conceived of incorporating "tapping" into his playing while attending a Led Zeppelin concert in 1971 at the age of sixteen. It was during Jimmy Page's "Heartbreaker" solo that the idea came to him: "He was doing a pull-off to an open string, and I thought wait a minute, open string…pull off."[34]

after we had already finished 'Heartbreaker'— it was an afterthought. That whole section was recorded in a different studio and was sort of slotted in the middle. If you notice, the whole sound of the guitar is different."[9] Unhappy with his initial attempt, Page showed up at Atlantic Studios in New York, probably on July 22 or 23 (while the group was on its third US tour). Jimmy Douglass (who would go on to work with Aretha Franklin, Hall & Oates, and the Rolling Stones, among others) was in attendance when Page appeared. At that time, Douglass was just a boy of sixteen or seventeen who was learning the ropes. He recalls their memorable encounter: "One day Jimmy came in and none of the other engineers were around and everybody's freaking out because it was Zeppelin's second album and they were hot […]" Douglass was asked to keep the guitarist happy while waiting for one of the engineers to get back, but Jimmy Page took no notice and decided to make a start with the young assistant. "Jimmy had 10 reels of 1/4 inch tape filled with solos, so we just chopped away at the 10 until we came up with a final solo. […] I was having a great time and I was doing a good job, so he was having a great time too. This was the solo that goes in 'Heartbreaker.'"[33] Just for the record, this solo is slightly higher than the original key. The explanation is probably that the different tape recorders were running at slightly different speeds!

The track then continues with a second guitar solo (from 2:59). This time, the Bonham-Jones duo is in on the act. They support the guitarist with an infectious energy, Bonham working his crash cymbal with enormous power and Jones doubling the Les Paul riff on his Jazz Bass. This new improvisation by Page is a demonstration of his velocity and formidable technique. While it could be said that a few of his phrases leave something to be desired, that they are a little approximate in places, his playing is so full of feeling and inspiration that these defects count for little.

Following a final verse, the track ends with a reprise of the main riff. "Heartbreaker" is one of the climaxes of the album and one of the tracks responsible for ushering in hard rock.

Led Zeppelin never played the whole of "Living Loving Maid" in concert, although Robert Plant performed it on his 1990 tour.

LIVING LOVING MAID (SHE'S JUST A WOMAN)

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 2:39

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, vocal harmonies
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Morgan Studios, London: June 25, 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Heartbreaker" and "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" are linked, which is why, when the album came out, DJs aired both of the songs.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

It seems that at exactly 0:35 an unfortunate dropout has swallowed the first note of Jimmy Page's riff (right-hand channel).

Genesis

Who is this woman who strolls along *with a purple umbrella and a fifty-cent hat*, this *missus cool rides out in her aged Cadillac*? Jimmy Page once revealed that his heroine was "a degenerate old woman trying desperately to be young."[3] Are we to see her as a groupie for whom the Led Zeppelin guitarist was another notch on the bedpost during the group's first US tour? Who knows!

What we do know is that the individual in question is someone who was no longer the flavor of the month for Page and Plant, the two songwriters. *When your conscience hits, you knock it back with pills*, sings Robert Plant, adding that this disturbing female has an irritating habit of *Telling tall tales of how it used to be...with the butler and the maid and the servants three*. The refrain is a little misogynistic to say the least: *Living, loving, she's just a woman*. It is almost like an echo of the Rolling Stones ("Mother's Little Helper") or Bob Dylan ("Just Like a Woman") from three years before! Is this why Jimmy Page and Robert Plant would later say they did not like "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)"? Led Zeppelin would only ever perform the song once onstage, at the Rheinhalle in Düsseldorf, West Germany, on March 12, 1970, when the group performed a sketchy version of it after "Heartbreaker." (Robert Plant, on the other hand, would include it in the set list for his 1990 solo tour.) The track was nevertheless chosen as the B-side of the single "Whole Lotta Love." It is interesting to note that on the first pressing of the album the song title was mistakenly given as "Livin' Lovin' Wreck"!

Production

Recorded at Morgan Studios in London on the same day as "Thank You," "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" sounds typically American despite its British context. The influences call to mind Creedence Clearwater Revival tinged with Tamla Motown. It is Robert Plant who opens the track, in a voice more soul

than rock, with his instantly recognizable timbre. He is joined right away by the fabulous rhythm section of John Paul Jones and John Bonham. The beat is pretty funky, with Bonham delivering a drum part with an unrivaled groove.

Jimmy Page records a number of guitar tracks, as is his custom. He plays the first, which can be heard in the right-hand channel, on his Gibson Les Paul Standard, alternating rhythm and lead. He takes care of the song's main riff, of course, which he doubles with a second guitar (stereo right), in all likelihood his Vox Phantom XII twelve-string, presumably supported by a second rhythm part played on his Gibson.

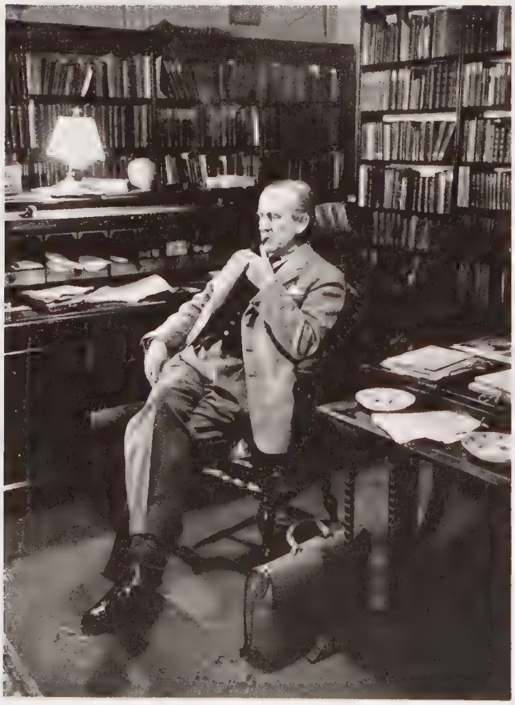
Robert Plant harmonizes with himself in the refrains, with his voice enhanced by very strong reverb. Page accompanies him on rhythm (in the right-hand channel), his Les Paul colored by the Vox Grey Wah. The guitarist is supported in turn by John Paul Jones with an excellent bass line that would have done bass players such as James Jamerson or Bootsy Collins proud.

At the end of the third verse, Jimmy Page launches into a very good solo displaying a unique sense of phrasing and melody. His playing gives the impression that he is perfectly at ease with his Gibson Les Paul "Number One." This time there is no show of speed; what counts is feeling alone. After a final verse and refrain, the track stops dead. "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" may not rank among the group's very best tracks, but its musical qualities fully justify its inclusion on Led Zeppelin's second album.

RAMBLE ON

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:34

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric and acoustic guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, percussion
Recorded
Groove Studios, New York: June 1, 1969
Juggy Sound Studio, New York: June 2, 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Eddie Kramer
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page



J. R. R. Tolkien at Merton College in Oxford. Tolkien was a major influence on Robert Plant—in "Ramble On" in particular.

Genesis

In "Ramble On," Robert Plant, the song's lyricist, has pulled on the boots of the hobbit Frodo Baggins, the main character in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, masterpieces of fantasy literature by J. R. R. Tolkien. Moreover, in the fourth verse Plant makes an explicit reference to *the darkest depths of Mordor*, Mordor being the "Black Land," which, in Tolkien's saga (and again in *The Silmarillion*), is the domain of the fearsome Sauron, the Dark Lord. He also mentions the hobbit Gollum.

"Ramble On" is thus a kind of journey undertaken by the Led Zeppelin singer through the world of Tolkien. The epic commences when *the autumn moon lights* the first-person narrator's way in the first verse. In the second verse we learn that the purpose of this initiatory journey is for the narrator to find the queen of all his dreams. Could *queen* here refer to the famous ring that confers the power on its wearer to conquer Middle-earth? Or might it denote Galadriel, the pretty elf of the Noldor line? The line *I met a girl so fair, but Gollum and the evil one crept up and slipped away with her* suggests that this may well be the case…

Production

Recorded at Groove Studios in New York the same day as "What Is and What Should Never Be," "Ramble On" offers a foretaste of Led Zeppelin's flights of folk-rock fantasy to come. This wonderful song opens with a beautiful lead-in strummed by Jimmy Page on acoustic guitar. His positions on the fingerboard suggest an open tuning, but the guitarist is actually using standard tuning. It sounds as if a delay has been added, with the guitar positioned in the right-hand channel and the repeat in the left. Although Page has stated that he composed this song on his Harmony Sovereign H1260, it was probably recorded on his E-ROS Model 606 Dakota.

In 2000, "Ramble On" was sampled by the hip-hop band Insane Clown Posse on the track "$50 Bucks" (*Psychopathics from Outer Space* compilation, 2000).

The four members of Led Zeppelin shot from above.

Like father, like son:
Jason Bonham in 2005.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Led Zeppelin never played "Ramble On" on tour. It wasn't until the group's reunion on December 10, 2007, that Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones, with Jason Bonham on drums, performed it live for the first time.

Page is supported by a percussion instrument struck by John Bonham (with added reverb). The nature of the instrument or equipment has been a subject of debate ever since the release of the album, the many and wide-ranging suggestions including the soles of his shoes, the lid of a plastic trash can, bongos, a floor tom covered with a towel, the cushion of his seat, and a guitar case. The last of these seems the most likely. At any rate, it is clear that he is striking a not particularly resonant object with his open hand or perhaps just one finger of each hand. Depending on how the mic is positioned, he might also be "playing" the cover of a book or the edge of a table. As Eddie Kramer has observed, "[…] if you position the mic properly, with the right EQing, anything is possible."[35]

After a few bars, John Paul Jones comes in on his Jazz Bass with a soft and silky sound. He is definitely playing through his amp, but it is not out of the question that he is also plugged directly into the console. His bass line is melodic and hints at his skills as an arranger, on which his reputation during his pre-Zeppelin years was founded. Robert Plant's voice, meanwhile, is warm and gentle, and it would be impossible to overstate the exceptional qualities that enable the singer to switch in an instant, with the greatest apparent ease, from mildness to the most feral rock mode. And this is the case with "Ramble On," whose verses are sung with great delicacy and its refrains are filled with rage. It is also important to emphasize the quality of his vibrato, which is not easy to make out in the mix, but is nonetheless present.

Before the first refrain, Jimmy Page adds a short picked motif (with fingers and plectrum) on his Les Paul colored by his Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo (from 0:59, left-hand channel). A second Gibson part crashes in with the refrain, the sound now distorted and aggressive (from 1:09, left-hand channel). Page is supported by the fantastic rhythm section of Bonham and Jones, who give a resounding demonstration of their incredible sense of groove. Bonham introduces an exceptional swing into his playing, creating the impression of the rhythm of a locomotive, his foot once again doing amazing things. This unique drummer is driven above all by instinct and his ear: "It's all very well to be playing a triple paradiddle [a pattern of eight strokes] – but who's going to know if you're actually doing it?" questions Bonham. "If you pay too much attention to technique you sound like every other drummer does. I think that being original is what counts."[21] Bonham is followed by the no-less-talented Jones, who on this track comes up with what is probably one of his best bass lines. His syncopation is in perfect time with Bonzo's, and their partnership is without a shadow of a doubt one of the most astonishing that rock music has ever known.

After the second verse, Jimmy Page plays a melodic motif that he harmonizes with two guitars in stereo. "I used the neck pickup on my Les Paul and backed off on the treble knob on the guitar, and ran it through the sustainer Roger Mayer made for me years before. When I was recording it, I was thinking in terms of making a sound sort of like a string arrangement."[15] This is indeed the impression given, all the more so as generous

amounts of reverb have been applied during mixing. These guitar overdubs were probably put down at Juggy Sound Studio in New York.

Jimmy does it again with a second motif at the end of the following refrain, this time without sustain (at 2:26). Finally, in the last verses, he adds a particularly harmonious accompaniment on his Gibson "Number One" (left channel). The track ends on the refrain, with Robert Plant answering himself (by means of overdubs), thereby creating an additional dynamic reinforced by the shifting of his voice from left to right within the stereo field.

"Ramble On" is probably one of the best tracks not only on the album but also in the entire Led Zeppelin catalog. The four Englishmen all display incredible talent that fully justifies the exceptional success they met with after forming the group.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

There are bootlegs that contain Jimmy Page's isolated Les Paul track (the one used in the refrains). Page can be heard producing feedback effects (which did not find their way into the final mix) that sound like an EBow (between 0:49 and 1:05).

Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, and John Paul Jones recording "Ramble On" for *Led Zeppelin II* at Groove Studios in New York.

"Moby Dick," showcasing John Bonham's expressive talent with a Zeppelinesque lack of moderation.

The Beastie Boys sampled "Moby Dick" (specifically the snare drum intro) on "What Comes Around" (*Paul's Boutique*, 1989).

MOBY DICK

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page / 4:21

Musicians
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, cowbell, tambourine
Recorded
Mystic Sound Studios, Hollywood, California: May 4–5, 1969
Mirror Sound, Los Angeles: May 6, 1969
Mayfair Recording Studios, New York: June 3, 1969
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Chris Huston, Eddie Kramer (?)
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

The cover of Herman Melville's famous novel, published in 1851.

Genesis

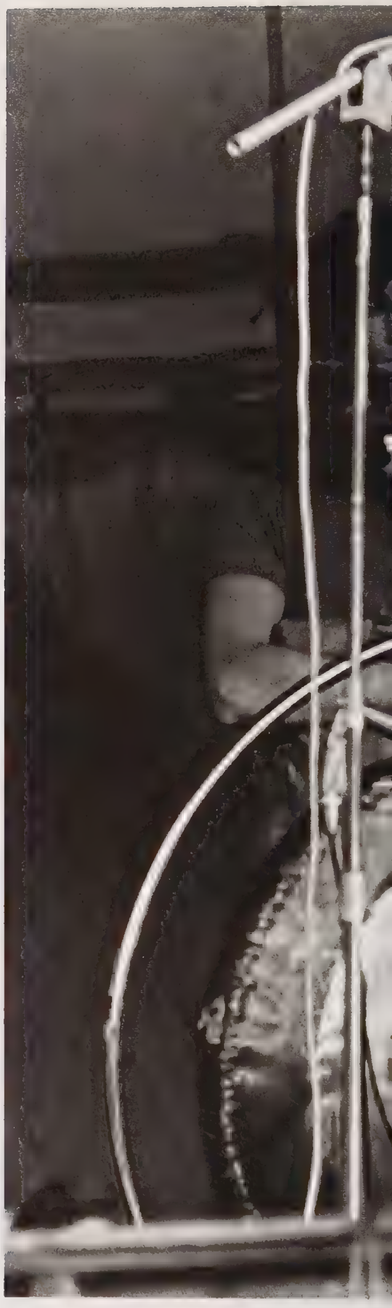
This instrumental originally saw the light of day during a jam in the studio involving Jimmy Page and John Bonham. At the beginning of May, the guitarist added a riff straight from "Watch Your Step" by Bobby Parker (1961), which can also be found in "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair," an adaptation of a blues by Sleepy John Estes that Led Zeppelin recorded on June 16, 1969, during *Chris Grant's Tasty Pop Sundae*. (The recording can be found on the *BBC Sessions*.) What, then, is Moby Dick? It's a blues-rock number recorded by the Led Zep power trio, the one absent from the lineup being Robert Plant.

The main point of this track is to showcase the exceptional virtuosity of John Bonham, the very archetype of the rock drummer. Named "Pat's Delight" (in honor of Pat Phillips Bonham, the drummer's wife) when it was performed in 1968 and 1969, it was then given the title "Moby Dick," and later, during the 1977 US tour, "Over the Top." Why "Moby Dick?" Because Jason, John Bonham's son (born on July 15, 1966), thought the piece was huge, like… the whale in Herman Melville's famous novel.

At the end of 1970, "Moby Dick" was released as a single in Italy, with "Gallows Pole" (taken from the third album) as the B-side.

Production

The track opens with a snare drum intro from John Bonham that ushers in Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones with a ten-bar blues pattern followed by a twelve-bar pattern. A drum solo then follows. This first part of "Moby Dick" is therefore performed as a trio (with Bonzo on cowbell). Chris Huston engineered the recording at the Mirror Sound studio in Los Angeles. As has already been mentioned, the riff is an adaptation of that in "Watch Your Step" by Bobby Parker, but Led Zeppelin is by no means the only band to have been inspired by that number. One need only listen to the Beatles' "I Feel Fine," the Rolling



John Bonham and his Ludwig "Natural Maple" kit at the Bath Festival of Blues on June 28, 1969.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

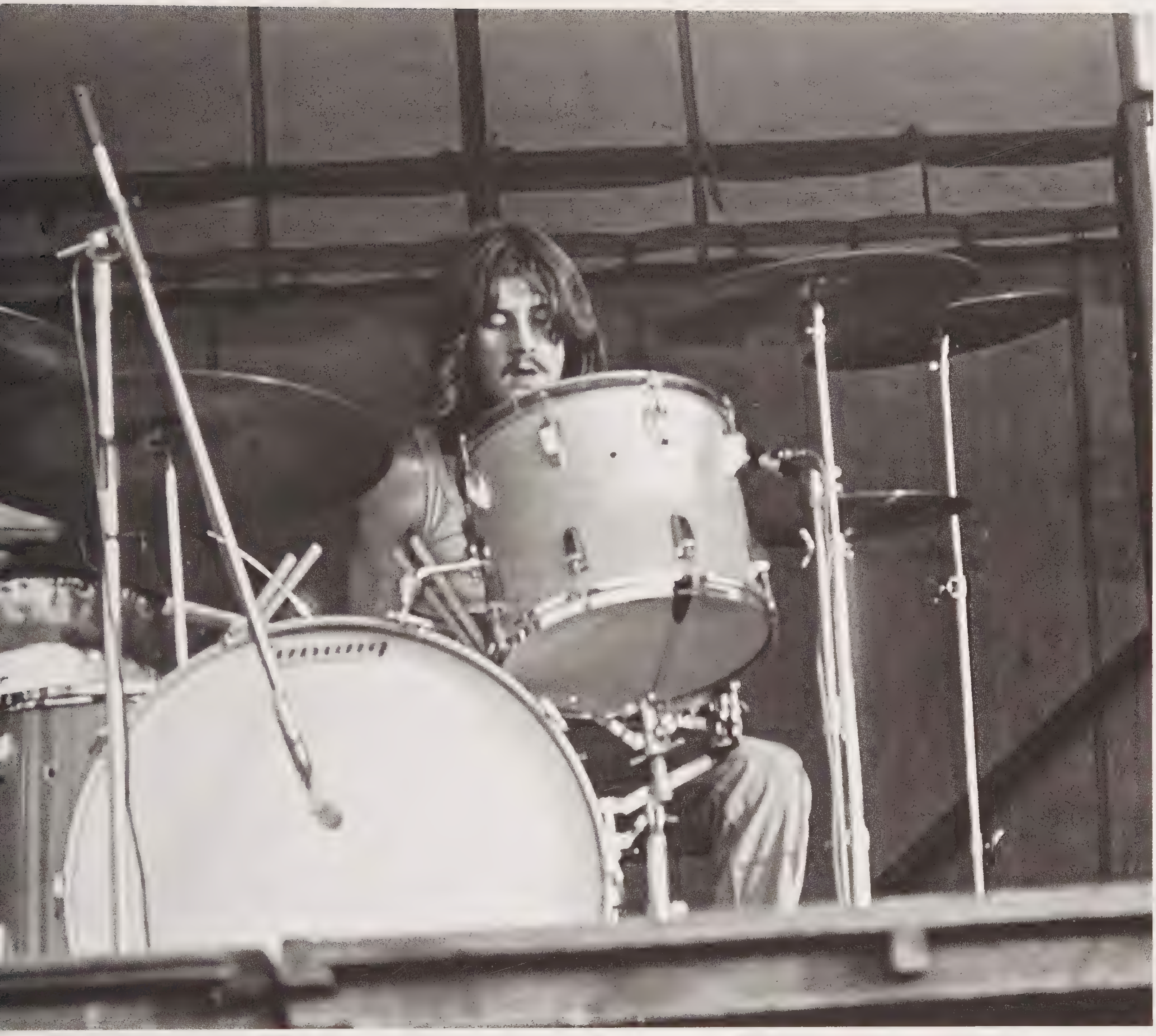
The "Moby Dick" riff, credited to Jimmy Page, was used as the theme music of *Disco 2*, a rock music show broadcast by BBC2 between January 1970 and July 1971 and produced by Rowan Ayers.

Bobby Parker

The guitarist Bobby Parker, whose "Watch Your Step" forms the basis for "Moby Dick."

Stones' "19th Nervous Breakdown," Deep Purple's "Rat Bat Blue," or the Yardbirds' "I'm Not Talking"…Jimmy Page plays his Les Paul "Number One" with Tone Bender fuzz. He has adopted drop-D tuning, having lowered the bottom string of his Gibson by a tone (to give D A D G B E). He also doubles himself in order to boost the sound of his guitar. In the twelve-bar section he switches between the riff and short solo phrases. John Paul Jones remains in standard tuning and follows Page on his Jazz Bass, which exudes power and intensity.

At the end of this section, Bonham launches into a long drum solo of almost three minutes' duration. He starts off with no drumsticks, using just his bare hands. His snare is disengaged, and a tambourine connected to his hi-hat pedal marks the beat. His style and technique call to mind those of a percussionist rather than a specialist of the drum kit: he attempts to make the head of his snare drum "sing" like that of a conga. At 2:53 he picks up his drumsticks and turns his attention, or at least part of it, to his toms. It is important to note that this solo results from many takes recorded at Mystic Sound Studios in Hollywood and, most likely, Mayfair Recording Studios in New York. It is possible to detect a number of obvious edits, at 2:14, at 2:53 (when he goes back to his



drumsticks), and at 3:00. "I didn't actually sit there and play a drum solo especially for the record. They just pieced it together."[36] It was indeed during an editing session that the various takes were spliced together and inserted at 1:00. This can be discerned from listening to the base track, laid down by the trio, on disc two of the deluxe edition. At the end of the first part (before Bonzo's solo, beginning at 1:00), three silent bars are counted and beaten out with the sticks before the group resumes and concludes the instrumental.

What can be said of Bonham's solo? Although undoubtedly offering another demonstration of his remarkable talent, the listener is left unsatisfied, and misses the magic the drummer creates and the feats he achieves when playing with the group. It is quite possible that solo performances did not enable him to realize his full and exceptional potential. Bonham would perform this same solo, which could carry on for almost half an hour, more convincingly live onstage. The stimulus provided by the public was probably the key factor. But he would never be as dazzling as he was as part of a rhythm section, particularly when partnered by his bandmate John Paul Jones. Their rhythm team would remain one of rock music's most remarkable ever.

Sonny Boy Williamson (Rice Miller) on British television in the mid-sixties. The virtuoso blues harmonica player was the first to record Willie Dixon's "Bring It On Home."

BRING IT ON HOME

Willie Dixon / 4:21

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, percussion
Recorded
Mystic Sound Studios, Hollywood, California: May 4–5, 1969
R&D Studios, Vancouver: May 10, 1969
Atlantic Studios, New York: July 1969 (?)
Mixing
A&R Studios, New York: August 29–30, 1969
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Chris Huston, Douglas Gyseman, Eddie Kramer (?)
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

Genesis

"Bring It On Home" is another borrowing by Led Zeppelin (Jimmy Page and Robert Plant in particular) from the blues of their African American elders. This song was composed by Willie Dixon (again!) and recorded for Checker in 1963 by that master of the harmonica Sonny Boy Williamson (Rice Miller) with Matt Murphy on guitar, Lafayette Leake or Billy Emerson on organ, Milton Rector on bass, and Al Duncan on drums. In 1972, Dixon sued Led Zeppelin, winning the right to have his name credited on future pressings of the album. This blues was itself a new version of another Dixon composition, "Back Home to Mama," performed for the first time by Big Walter Horton in 1954.

Musically, the borrowed part constitutes a relatively small proportion of the whole—just the intro and coda. The whole of the central section is by Led Zeppelin. The lyrics to this part are in the same vein, however, and speak of homesickness, railroad travel, and, once again, that love that reaps nothing but ingratitude…in a word, all the ingredients that make the blues so timeless.

Production

The first part of "Bring It On Home" is an authentic blues performed by Jimmy Page and Robert Plant. Page plays his Les Paul while Plant sings the lead vocal and plays the harmonica. The atmosphere generated by the two musicians is extraordinary. With incredible reverb from the EMT 140 plate, they radiate an emotion worthy of the great bluesmen themselves. Plant sings in an earnest and inspired voice while at the same time delivering some excellent harmonica, most likely on his Hohner Echo Super Vamper. His singing and playing are positioned on the right of the stereo and reverberate on the left, creating an entrancing effect. The sound recording has a live feel to it, and Plant can be sensed intermittently stepping away from the mic capsule, thereby reinforcing the roots aspect of his performance. The recording was

"Bring It On Home" is a blues number dating from 1963. Six years later, Robert Plant was to demonstrate his own harmonica skills on this track.

made at R&D Studios in Vancouver, a pretty rudimentary studio by all accounts, and aptly nicknamed "the Hut." It should be pointed out that Plant, in keeping with the practice of days gone by, was not using headphones, but this did not prevent sound engineer Douglas Gyseman from capturing his extraordinary expressivity with great panache. Jimmy Page, meanwhile, plays a rhythmic blues on his Gibson with the sound pretty muted and the mini-humbucker pickup switched on.

Comparing Sonny Boy Williamson's "Bring It On Home" with Led Zeppelin's, there is no getting around the similarity between the two versions: the same intention, the same harmonies, and the same words… Nevertheless, Jimmy Page would refute any accusation of plagiarism: "Christ, there's only a tiny bit taken from Sonny Boy Williamson's version and we threw that in as a tribute to him. People say, 'Oh, "Bring It On Home" is stolen.' Well, there's only a little bit in the song that relates to anything that had gone before it […]."[37] Yes, Jimmy, that would be the beginning and the ending…

In truth, the guitarist's protestations are not difficult to understand, as the central section of the song owes nobody anything. This sequence of more than two minutes' duration is inserted into the middle of the blues (at 1:42). This time, John Paul Jones and John Bonham are in on the act. Page launches the supercharged rock section with a riff on his Les Paul colored by Tone Bender fuzz. The sound is aggressive, the guitar having been recorded from the amp: "'Bring It On Home' was played through a Marshall,"[9] confirms the guitarist—in all probability the 100-watt Marshall 1959SLP "Plexi." The riff has been recorded on two tracks positioned on the left and right of the stereo, and is followed in after a few bars by a third guitar that harmonizes with the other two parts. The rhythm section is powerful, Jones underscoring the riff before adopting a more R&B style in the verses. In addition to the drums, Bonzo plays a percussion instrument that can be heard in the right-hand channel. He seems to be striking a kind of clave or woodblock, or is perhaps banging his drumsticks together. Jimmy Page reveals one interesting detail about Bonham's drumming on this track when he observes that "We'd recorded 'Bring It On Home' in Atlantic Studios where Bonzo used double bass drums."[1]

Robert Plant's lead vocal, recorded in Vancouver, is high-pitched and powerful, and surely one of the singer's most energetic rock performances. Douglas Gyseman seems to have used a trick to record a fragment of his vocal that was distorting on each of his takes. He is said to have asked Plant to sing into a disconnected mic, with—unbeknown to the singer, of course—a second, active mic placed a more reasonable distance away, shielded from any distortion! Finally, the track's coda (from 3:53) consists of a reprise of the blues that introduced it.

Although "Bring It On Home" borrows heavily from the Sonny Boy Williamson version, it seems unfair that this track should be credited to Willie Dixon alone.

It is "Bring It On Home" that brings Led Zeppelin's second album to a close and, it should be said, in a remarkable manner too.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Bring It On Home" was to become one of Led Zeppelin's great warhorses in concert. A superb example, performed onstage at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1970, can be enjoyed on the DVD *Led Zeppelin*. In the group's 1973 shows, "Bring It On Home" would be used as the intro to "Black Dog."

Jimmy Page with his E-ROS 606 Dakota during a recording session at Olympic Sound Studios.

John Bonham and Jimmy Page (again with his E-ROS 606 Dakota) in London in 1969. A musical understanding that never faded.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At 3:13, John Bonham can be heard hammering his bass drum fourteen times in rapid succession!

LA LA

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page / 4:07

Musicians: Jimmy Page: electric and acoustic guitars / **John Paul Jones:** bass, organ / **John Bonham:** drums / **Recorded: Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London:** April 14, 1969 / **Technical Team: Producer:** Jimmy Page / **Sound Engineer:** George Chkiantz

Genesis

"La La" was one of the first three first songs to be recorded for Led Zeppelin's second album. This rough mix has never been completed, possibly because it clashed with the other numbers on the album.

"La La" was eventually pulled out of a drawer at Atlantic and included on the 2014 rerelease of *Led Zeppelin II* in 2014.

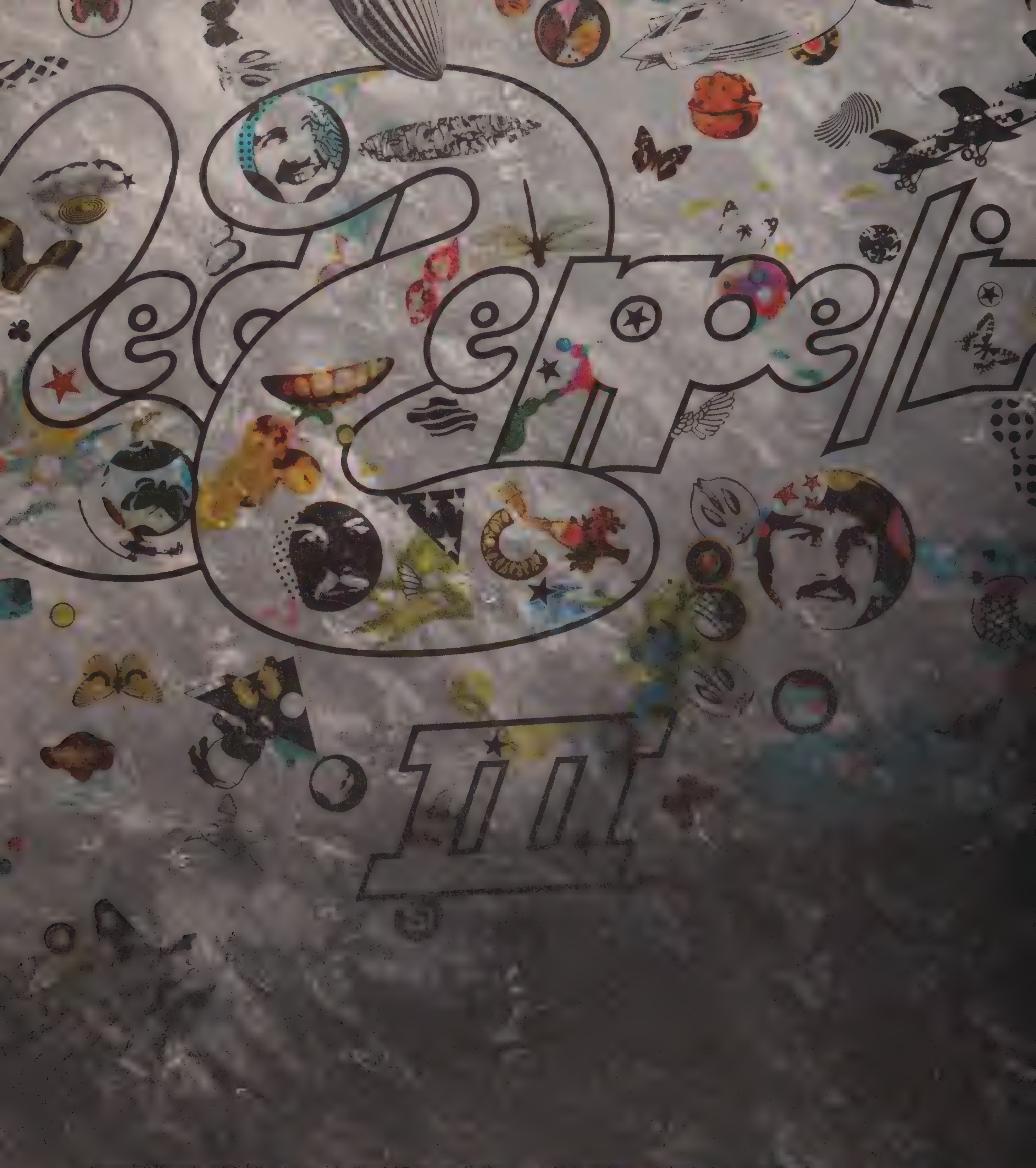
Production

"La La," then, was one of the first takes for *Led Zeppelin II*. It was probably a trial run for the group, who were limbering up before throwing themselves into recording their new album, and in doing so enabling George Chkiantz to get his bearings. Nevertheless, this instrumental is extremely interesting because it is made up of some six different parts, and contains within it the seed of the future epics beloved of Jimmy Page, such as "The Song Remains the Same" and "The Rain Song," to mention just two.

The track starts with John Paul Jones on the Hammond C-3. The sound is very sixties, and when Jones is joined by his bandmates, the result is like British rock with a Tamla Motown influence. Page plays his acoustic E-ROS Model 606 Dakota, but also, with a degree of distortion, his Dragon Telecaster. Meanwhile, John Bonham, supported by Jones, lays down a pretty funky rhythm.

This is followed by a solo acoustic guitar passage during which Page strums some rich and relatively unusual chords (between 0:50 and 1:03). This sequence is interrupted by a riff on the Telecaster colored by Tone Bender fuzz. The group then immediately dives into a rock passage the Who would perhaps have been proud to call their own, with Bonham firing off some Keith Moon–like tom fills. Before long, Page's Dakota resumes center stage with a sequence of descending chords characteristic of his style (1:12). There is then a return to the initial theme, which gives Page an opportunity to play a very good solo on his Telecaster (from 1:25). This is succeeded by a rock sequence in which Jimmy is responsible for a number of guitar tracks including a rhythm part with wah-wah and a slide solo (between 2:11 and 3:04). Finally we get to the coda, which is calmer, funkier, and eventually ends with a fade-out.

It is a shame that "La La" progressed no further than this rough sketch, and we can only dream about the incredible track it might eventually have become…



1. IMMIGRANT SONG 2. FRIENDS 3. CELEBRATION DAY 4. SINCE I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU 5. OUT ON THE TILES 6. GALLOWS POLE 7. TANGERINE 8. THAT'S THE WAY 9. BRON-Y-AUR STOMP 10. HATS OFF TO (ROY) HARPER **OUTTAKES** : KEY TO THE HIGHWAY / TROUBLE IN MIND / ST. TRISTAN'S SWORD

ALBUM LED ZEPPELIN III

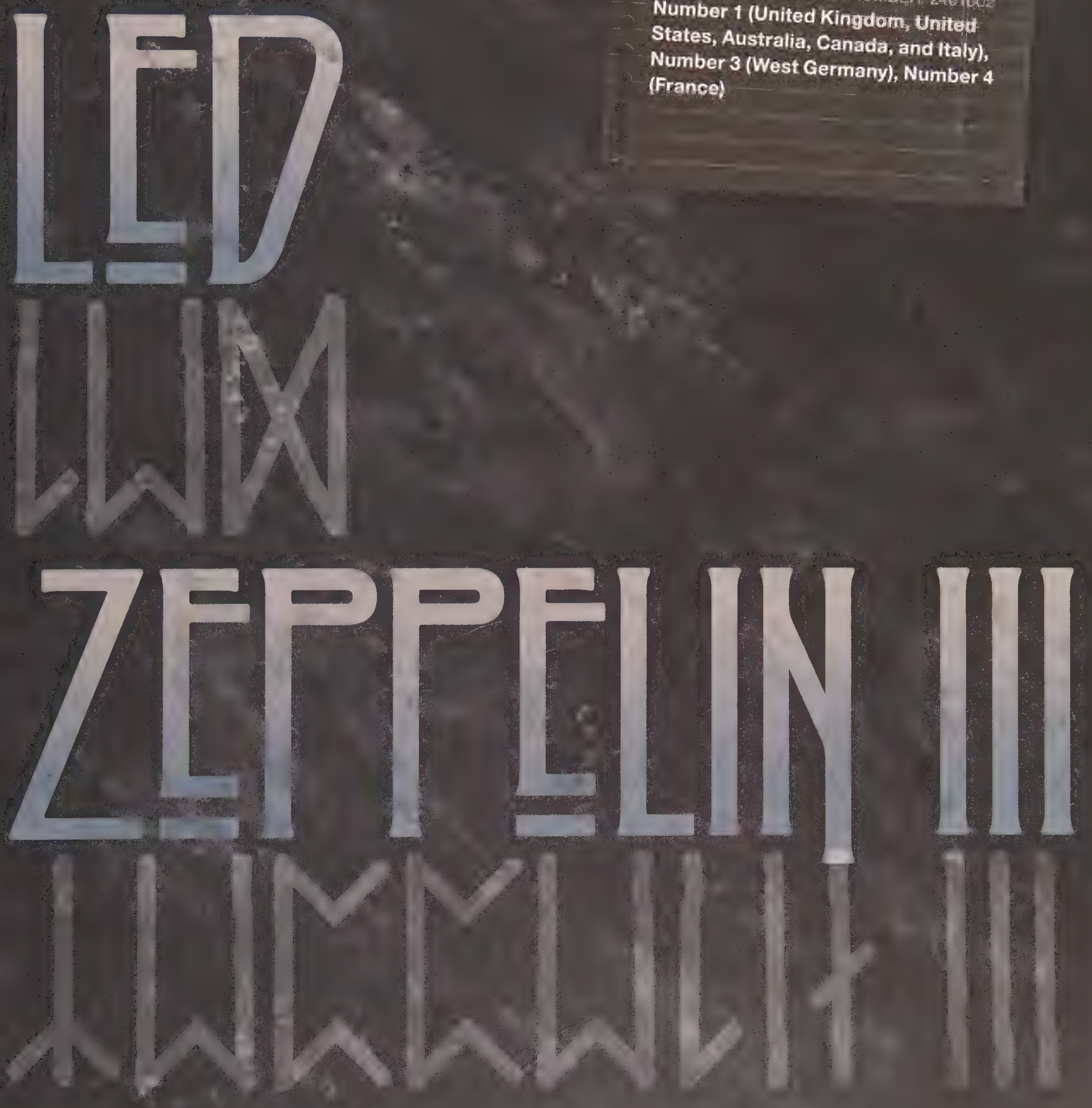
RELEASE DATE

UNITED KINGDOM: OCTOBER 23, 1970

UNITED STATES: OCTOBER 4, 1970

Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: 2401002

Number 1 (United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada, and Italy), Number 3 (West Germany), Number 4 (France)



John Paul Jones, John Bonham, Robert Plant, and Jimmy Page in 1970 with their third album on its way. Masterpiece alert!

LED ZEPPELIN III: THE ALBUM THAT CAME DOWN FROM "GOLDEN MOUNTAIN"

Since forming Led Zeppelin in 1968, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham had come a very long way. They had released two best-selling albums and played several hundred concerts in Europe and the United States. Not only had they completed four North American tours in one year, many of their gigs had lasted nearly four hours—four hours of rock 'n' roll at its most intense. They had piloted their airship toward the heavens, reaping fame and fortune, the latter thanks to a guaranteed $100,000 per US show compared to $1,500 not long before! The royalties and fees had enabled Page, while retaining Pangbourne, to buy Boleskine House (the onetime home of Aleister Crowley) on the shores of Loch Ness in Scotland, Plant to install himself at Jennings Farm (near Kidderminster), Jones to acquire a charming residence in Chorleywood (Hertfordshire), and Bonham to exchange his flat in Dudley for a farm at Hagley (not far from Birmingham). The other side of the coin was extreme fatigue and an urgent need to continually do bigger, better, and different things.

The Tumult of Touring

The first few months of 1970 had been punishing: a UK tour (eight dates between January 7 and February 17), a European tour that had taken the band to Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, and Austria (ten dates between February 23 and March 12), and an exhausting and challenging fifth American tour (twenty-five shows between March 21 and April 18).

An unforeseen event of a somewhat comic nature had occurred while they were in Denmark. Countess Eva von Zeppelin, the granddaughter of Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, was less than thrilled to learn that a British rock band had taken the name of her illustrious family in vain. On February 28, 1970, while the quartet were rehearsing in a studio in Copenhagen, she threatened them with a lawsuit and did everything in her power to prevent them from making a television appearance. The musicians duly invited her to take tea with them, a meeting that was reportedly cordial. But soon after, the unfortunate countess happened upon the sleeve of Led Zeppelin's first album, triggering a whole new flare-up! In an attempt to calm things down, Peter Grant decided that for the remainder of the Scandinavian tour, his protégés would perform as the "Nobs." As well as being slang for both "a person of social distinction" and "male member," the name may also have been chosen in honor of their Swiss tour promoter Claude Nobs! As things turned out, the group presented themselves under this moniker for only one concert, that of February 28.

D ZEPPELIN

John Paul Jones with his wife, Maureen, and two eldest daughters, Tamara and Jacinda. The calm in the country before the storm in the studio.

In the United States, the group encountered a far more volatile social climate than had prevailed when they last visited, with significant racial tension and increasingly militant opponents to the Vietnam War protesting against an administration enmeshed in its own contradictions. Furthermore, their hippie look and long hair often provoked aggression and taunts in the southern states. Whatever they were thrown up against, however, and in spite of their very different personalities, the members of the band were united by their mutual appreciation of one another. On the subject of the relationship among the band members, Robert Plant had the following to say in 2014: "It was a very easygoing and very unaffected time—miraculous really."[40]

Seeking Inspiration on Cadair Idris

The day after Led Zeppelin's fifth American tour, which wound to a close on April 18, 1970, at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix, Arizona (the Las Vegas concert scheduled for the day after was canceled because Plant had laryngitis), Ahmet Ertegun lost no time in reminding Peter Grant and the four members of the group of his existence. This was a clear sign that they would have to start thinking about the next album upon their return to England. While John Paul Jones and John Bonham turned their backs on their obligations as rock stars for a while in order to spend time with their families and enjoy their lives as gentleman farmers, Plant suggested to Page that they go and recharge their batteries in a cottage in the mountains of Snowdonia in Gwynedd, Wales, where the singer's parents had taken him for vacations when he was a child. "He was going on about what a beautiful place it was and I became pretty keen to go there," recalls Page. "I'd never spent any time at all in Wales, but I wanted to. So off we went, taking along our guitars of course."[21]

Belonging to a friend of Plant's father, this eighteenth-century cottage, named Bron-Yr-Aur (Welsh for "golden hill"), had neither running water nor electricity but offered plenty of food for the imagination. It is located not far from the mountain known as Cadair Idris, whose name ("the chair of Idris") has its origins in Celtic legend.

Above: Bron-Yr-Aur, the Welsh retreat of Jimmy Page and Robert Plant. **Right:** Jimmy Page's girlfriend, Charlotte Martin.

CHARLOTTE FOREVER

Jimmy Page met the top French model Charlotte Martin the day he turned twenty-six, on January 9, 1970, following a memorable performance by Led Zeppelin at the Royal Albert Hall in London. This ravishing young woman, with whom he was to fall in love, was already a darling of the rock scene. She had been the girlfriend of Eric Clapton for almost three years and is rumored to have had a fling with George Harrison, which is said to have provoked Clapton to "steal" George's wife Pattie from the former Beatle in revenge. Jimmy would go on to have a daughter, Scarlet (born March 24, 1971), with Charlotte.

Idris was a giant and a poet, a philosopher and an astronomer, but is also thought to be the seventh-century Welsh prince Idris ap Gwyddno (or Idris Gawr), who is reputed to have vanquished the Irish at the foot of this same mountain. Bards used to climb to the summit of Cadair Idris in search of inspiration, and some believe that anyone who falls asleep alone on the mountaintop will wake up as either a poet or…a madman. Finally, it is in this part of Wales that Excalibur, the magic sword belonging to King Arthur, was cast into the depths of a lake (Llydaw, Dinas, or Ogwen).

It was therefore with Arthurian legend as their spiritual point of reference that Robert Plant and Jimmy Page set out for Gwynedd in April 1970, taking with them not electric instruments and powerful Marshall amps, but acoustic guitars and tape recorders. "I had already written 'Immigrant Song,'" recalls the guitarist, "and came up with 'Friends' a day or two before we got together at Robert [Plant]'s house in the West Midlands. I was keen to do 'Gallows Pole' because I had an arrangement I wanted to try, and I had 'Tangerine' from a number of years beforehand—before Led Zeppelin."[40]

Accompanying them were Maureen Plant and little Carmen Jane as well as Page's girlfriend Charlotte Martin (a twenty-one-year-old top French model to whom he had been introduced by Roger Daltrey, the lead singer of the Who), plus roadies Clive Coulson and Sandy MacGregor. "They just wanted some peace and quiet," Coulson told journalist Phil Sutcliffe. "They met local people while they were there. They ended up buying some goats from one of the local farms. Jimmy and Robert went into Machynlleth and to a pub called 'Owen Glendower.' Everyone mucked in in the cottage, there was no superstar shit. Pagey was the tea man." And he continued: "There was an open hearth fire. Pagey had a Martin guitar and they wrote a lot of songs at the cottage."[41] Jimmy Page remembers things a little differently, at least concerning the number of songs they composed there: "When Robert and I went to Bron-Yr-Aur, it wasn't like it was, 'Let's go down to Wales and write,'" says Page. "The original plan was to just go there, hang out,

THE
GLYNDWR
HOTEL

The pub in Machynlleth, hangout of Robert Plant and Jimmy Page after a long day of writing.

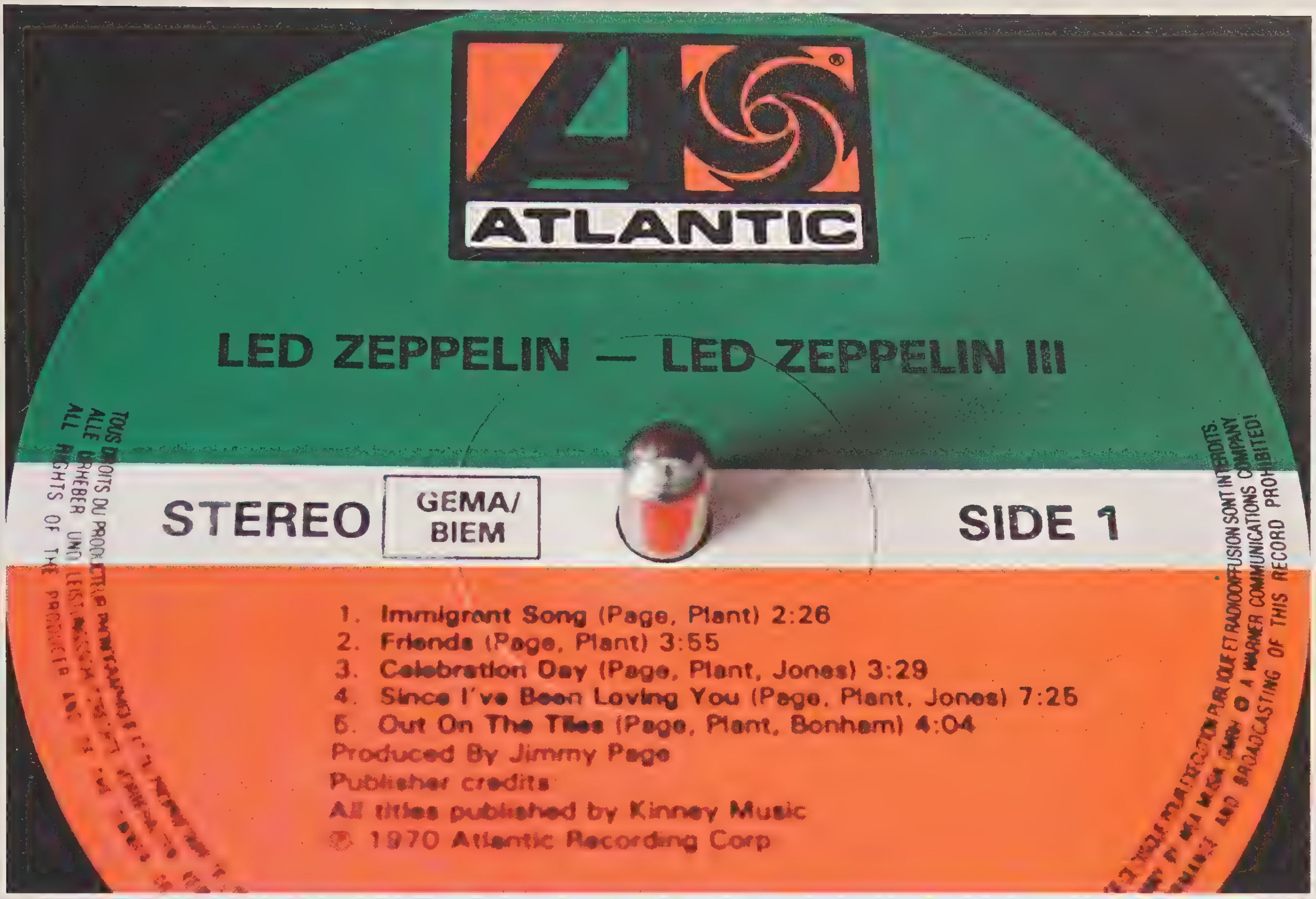
Thirty-seven years after the release of *Led Zeppelin III*, Zacron designed the cover of an edition of *Classic Rock* magazine that paid tribute to the British quartet. His design is closely based on the famous album sleeve.

and really appreciate the countryside. The only song we really finished up there was 'That's the Way,' but being in the country set a tone, and it established a standard of traveling for inspiration."[9]

The Album: The Sky's the Limit

It was therefore in northwest Wales, where legend rubs shoulders with fantasy amid invigorating long walks along the River Dovey, that Led Zeppelin's third album was born. "After all the heavy, intense vibe of touring which is reflected in the raw energy of the second album, it was just a totally different feeling,"[11] explains Jimmy Page. The third album would indeed mark a radical departure from the first two. The approach was not dissimilar from that of the Band with their *Music from Big Pink* (1968) or Bob Dylan (accompanied by the Band) with his *Basement Tapes* (1975) in that the mood of the record was determined largely by location (Woodstock, New York, in both these instances). From there to claiming that Page and Plant had been influenced by the folk-rock scene or West Coast rock is a pretty big step—or, according to Jimmy Page, downright wrong: "I remember an absurd press comment comparing us to Crosby, Stills and Nash because of the acoustic elements on the third album. I thought, that's absolutely pathetic, because acoustic guitars were all over the first two albums. It was always there, it was right at the core of everything. It was always meant to be there. The third album was just another evolution. It was different from the second album as the second album is different from the first."[9]

"Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," "Your Time Is Gonna Come," and "Black Mountain Side" on the first album, and "Ramble On" and "Thank You" on the second testify to the appeal of acoustic arrangements to Jimmy Page, although it cannot be denied that on *Led Zeppelin III* the guitarist and composer would go even further. With "Friends," the quartet would open the doors of folk rock to the exotic and enchanting moods of the Orient, while "Gallows Pole" and "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" revisit the folk blues of Texas (Leadbelly) and Mississippi (Bukka White). "Tangerine" harks back to the ancient ballads of the British Isles, and "That's the Way" expresses the mystery and magic of Wales, and of Page's and Plant's recent experience of the mountainous landscapes of Snowdonia. And then, of course, there are the tracks that crackle with electricity, starting with "Immigrant Song," one of the best in the entire Led Zeppelin catalog. Moreover, the guitarist would energetically refute the "heavy metal" label that the US media were so keen to attach to the band. As for "Since I've Been Loving You," this is a slow number of enormous sensuality carried by the ingenious subtlety of Page's guitar and Plant's extraordinary vocal


ATLANTIC
LED ZEPPELIN — LED ZEPPELIN III
STEREO
GEMA/ BIEM
SIDE 1
1. Immigrant Song (Page, Plant) 2:26
2. Friends (Page, Plant) 3:55
3. Celebration Day (Page, Plant, Jones) 3:29
4. Since I've Been Loving You (Page, Plant, Jones) 7:25
5. Out On The Tiles (Page, Plant, Bonham) 4:04
Produced By Jimmy Page
Publisher credits
All titles published by Kinney Music
℗ 1970 Atlantic Recording Corp

The center label of *Led Zeppelin III*. Five magical tracks on side one.

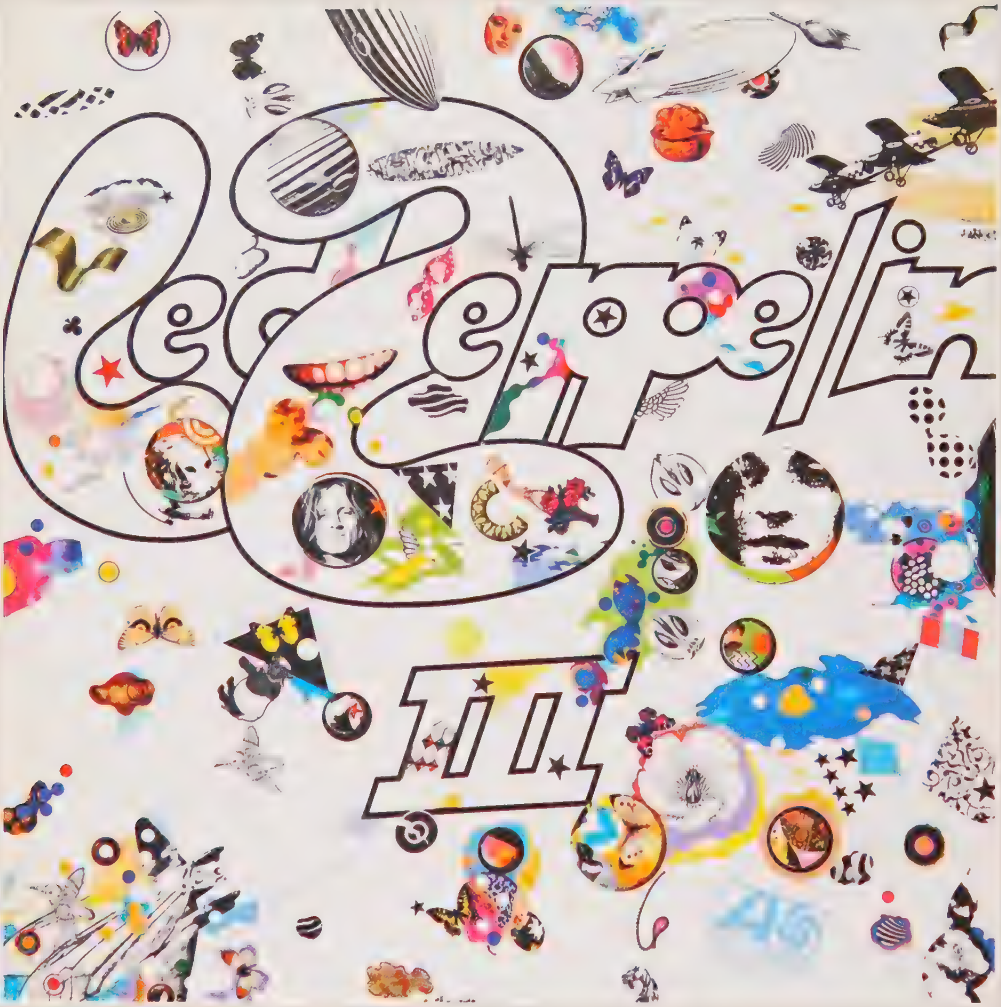
expressivity. As Andrew Mueller writes: "For most of III, it's not really what he's singing, but how he's singing it, that mighty voice another weapon in Zeppelin's formidable arsenal ..."[42]

When all is said and done, the four members of Led Zeppelin were very pleased with their work on the album. Robert Plant sums it up perfectly: "Now we've done *Led Zeppelin III*, the sky's the limit. It shows we can change, shows we can do these things. It means there are endless possibilities and directions for us to go in. We're not stale and this proves it."[21]

Disoriented Fans

Led Zeppelin's third album was released in the United States (having generated 700,000 advance orders, a record for Atlantic!) on October 4, 1970, and in Europe and the rest of the world on October 23. The event was celebrated in style with a first-place position in the United Kingdom (where the album remained on the charts for forty-four weeks), the United States, Australia, Canada, and Denmark; third place in West Germany and Norway, fourth place in France, and fifth place in Japan...Other than in the United Kingdom, however, the album dropped off the charts in early 1971, possibly because of a complete dearth of television appearances by the band, but more likely owing to the incomprehension of many fans who were disoriented by the acoustic direction taken by the quartet following the explosions of hard rock from the first two LPs. The album has still managed to sell some eight million copies, six million of them in the United States alone (only half as many as *Led Zeppelin II*).

Like many of the fans from the early days, the press were divided: "In many ways, a much better album than II,"[43] wrote Chris Welch in the *Melody Maker*. Similarly, in the *NME*, Nick Logan admitted having at first been "utterly confused" before realizing that on the first side the LP "featured rock leather" and on the second, "folkie suede."[44] In the *Rolling Stone* of November 26, 1970, however, the renowned American rock critic Lester Bangs admitted his disappointment despite having liked a number of the songs (including "That's the Way"): "What's great about it, though, the Zep's special genius, is that the whole effect is so utterly two-dimensional and unreal. You could play it, as I did, while watching a pagan priestess performing the ritual dance of Ka before the flaming sacrificial altar in *Fire Maidens of Outer Space* with the TV sound turned off. And believe me, the Zep



The pop-art visuals developed by Jimmy Page's friend Zacron for the third album.

made my blood throb to those jungle rhythms even more frenziedly."[45]

By and large, though, the critics were pretty damning, and Jimmy Page took it very badly: "The third LP got a real hammering from the press and I really got brought down by it. I thought the album in total was good, but the press didn't like it [...]. Yet we were getting all these knocks and became very dispirited. The result was that we left off [from giving interviews] for almost a year."[3] Today, *Led Zeppelin III* sits at number 9 in *Q* magazine's list of best British albums and at number 99 in *Mojo*'s list of the best albums in the history of rock.

The Sleeve

Jimmy Page commissioned the sleeve design for the third Led Zeppelin album from a former fellow student and friend at Kingston College of Art, an artist by the name of Zacron, who had become a tutor at Wimbledon School of Art and a lecturer at Leeds College of Art. Since creating a trompe-l'oeil work called *A Window on London* in 1961 (later bought by Page), Zacron had been known as the "King of Collage." His meeting with the four members of Led Zeppelin took place on January 24, 1970, the day of a concert in Leeds. After painstakingly choosing a portrait of each of the musicians (four photographs to be printed in black and white [recto] and negative [verso]), Zacron set to work on his creative task. Against a white background he set a multitude of images including a zeppelin, an airplane, flowers, and butterflies. The unusual thing about the design, however, is that on the right-hand side, where the sleeve opens, is a small wheel with which the images can be rotated at will to create a personalized universe or scheme, the overall effect being a kind of surreal theater symbolizing the diversity of the quartet's music. The same graphically diverse concept is continued on the reverse (this time against a black background) and inside the gatefold sleeve. The cover is a minor masterpiece very much in psychedelic pop style, although Jimmy Page (whose idea it had originally been!) would later claim he had never been particularly fond of what he regarded as a "teeny-bopperish" artistic approach.

Studio One at Island Studios on Basing Street in 1972.

According to some sources, the session of May 6, 1970, took place not at Olympic Studios but at Morgan Studios in Willesden.

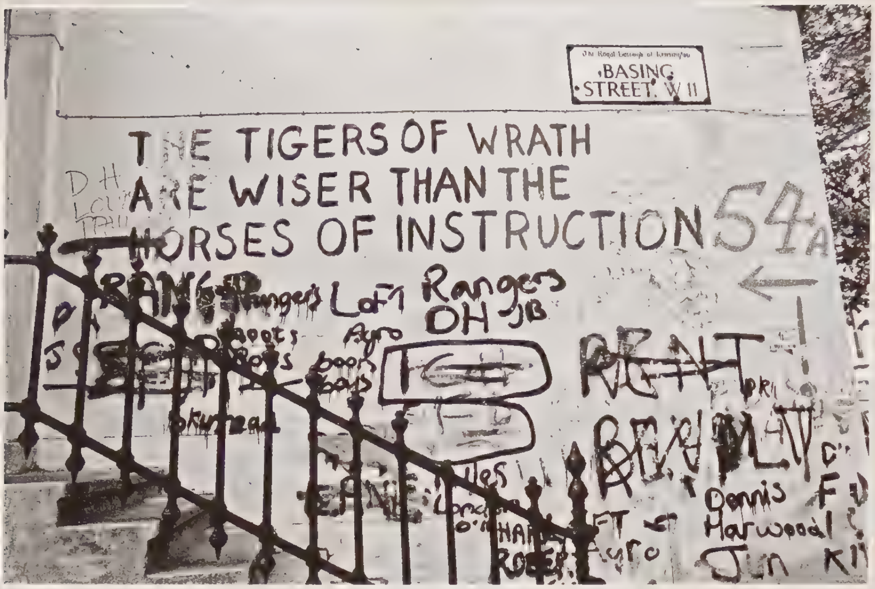
"But we were on top of a deadline, so of course there was no way to make any radical changes to it. There were some silly bits—little chunks of corn and nonsense like that."[46]

On the vinyl disc itself, Jimmy Page decided to address his public in an even more surreal or esoteric way than Zacron had visually with the cover. During the mixing of *Led Zeppelin III* at Ardent Studios in Memphis, Terry Manning suggested to Page that he send the group's fans a message. In the end, Manning inscribed two phrases on the master disc (one on each side), both taken from the writings of Aleister Crowley, one of the guitarist-songwriter's heroes: on side one "So Mote Be It" and on side two "Do What Thou Wilt." (The complete phrase from which this was taken, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law," being the motto of the fictional Abbey of Thelema [*Fais ce que voudras*] in the novel *Gargantua* by Rabelais.) Just for the record, Jimmy Page was to reject the first few matrices for the album, finally adopting the fifth for each of the two sides: A5 and B5.

The Recording: Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be the Whole of the Law

Following their bucolic sojourn at Bron-Yr-Aur cottage in Wales in mid-May, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant got back together with John Paul Jones and John Bonham at Headley Grange in Hampshire. (Some sources specify May 19.) "Rather than waste a lot of studio time thinking of the riffs and lyrics in the studio," John Paul Jones told *Disc* magazine in November 1970, "we decided this place in Hampshire was definitely the best place to get the numbers down before we went there."[47] A former poorhouse, erected at the end of the eighteenth century to provide shelter for orphans and the infirm, the building was bought in 1870 by an industrialist named Thomas Kemp, who made it his private residence. In the nineteen sixties, the buildings were transformed into rehearsal rooms for groups wanting at the same time to commune with England's green and pleasant countryside. "It was a horrible place—cold and freezing," recalls tour manager Richard Cole. "That first time, they were all staying there, though later on it'd

All smiles from John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, John Bonham, and Robert Plant. Their third album had put them on top of the world.


BASING STREET W 11
THE TIGERS OF WRATH ARE WISER THAN THE HORSES OF INSTRUCTION
54A
Rangers
OH-JB
Dennis Harwood

Graffiti by the entrance to the Island Records and Island Studios building on Basing Street in London.

ENTER TOWER C | GATE 15

127 A 6
SEC. ROW SEAT

P 1628

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

SEPT. 19

A ticket for Led Zeppelin's Madison Square Garden concert on September 19, 1970.

just be Jimmy and some of the crew that kept the rooms. It was too miserable for the rest of us."[2] For the Led Zeppelin guitarist, what might have seemed like a disadvantage actually turned out to be an asset: "Other bands had rehearsed there and they hadn't had any complaints. That's a major issue, because you don't want to go somewhere and start locking into the work process and then have to pull out."[41] That spring in 1970, Led Zeppelin sent for the mobile studio that the Rolling Stones had only recently brought into operation. If Jimmy Page felt at home in these austere surroundings, his taste for the occult probably had something to do with it, as Andy Johns suggests. "Jimmy thought he'd seen a ghost there too," says the sound engineer brought in for the sessions. "The rest of us moaned about being cold, but Jimmy was more concerned with creepy noises or flying fucking furniture."[47]

The main purpose of the Headley Grange sessions was to work on the newly written pieces "Friends," "Celebration Day," "Since I've Been Loving You," "Gallows Pole," and "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp," to rehearse them to the point where they had acquired a more or less definitive structure. The group also used the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio to put down some of the backing tracks. In parallel with this rehearsing and recording activity, the group also held recording sessions at two London studios: first of all Olympic Studios in Barnes, in May and June 1970, and then Island Studios on Basing Street (Notting Hill Gate) in July.

According to Jimmy Page, the group was working on seventeen album tracks during this time, although between December 1969 and August 1970 they actually focused on a total of twenty or so different compositions. In the end, ten were chosen for the album: "Immigrant Song," "Friends," "Celebration Day," "Since I've Been Loving You," "Out on the Tiles," "Gallows Pole," "Tangerine," "That's the Way," "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp," and "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper." Most of the remaining ten would eventually be reworked and find a place on later albums: "Over the Hills and Far Away" and "The Crunge" on *Houses of the Holy* (1973); "The Rover," "Bron-Yr-Aur," and "Down by the Seaside" on *Physical Graffiti* (1975); and "Poor Tom" on *Coda* (1982). Two outtakes, "Key to the Highway/Trouble in Mind" and "St. Tristan's Sword," would be included on CD2 of the deluxe edition of *Led Zeppelin III* (2014) and CD3 of the deluxe edition of *Coda* (2015), respectively. Finally, three compositions that got no further than the rough sketch stage (recorded on audio cassette at Bron-Yr-Aur) have never been released. These are two songs, "Another Way to Wales" and "I Wanna Be Her Man," and an instrumental, "Summer at Bron-Yr-Aur."

A Fast Pace of Work

Unfortunately, no details are known of the sessions at Headley Grange involving the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, although a certain amount is known about the work done at the two London studios. The first of these sessions had actually taken place at Olympic Studios in December 1969, and it was not until five months later that six more sessions were held there, between May 6 and June 10, 1970. The group was focused and knew the place inside out, parts of their first two albums

Jimi Hendrix, the archetypal *guitar hero*, who was cut down in his prime on September 18, 1970.

A TRIBUTE TO JIMI FROM JIMMY (WELL...ROBERT)

On September 18, 1970, the world was stunned to learn of the sudden death of Jimi Hendrix in London at twenty-seven years of age. Led Zeppelin, whose sixth North American tour was drawing to a close the following day with two shows at Madison Square Garden in New York, paid the musician a heartfelt tribute. It was Robert Plant who spoke: "Before we go any further…a rather uncomfortable thing happened yesterday for everybody and a great loss for the music world…and we'd like to think that you, as well as us, are very sorry that Jimi Hendrix went…I spoke to a close friend of his about half an hour ago and he said probably he would have preferred everybody to get on and have a good time rather than talk about it. So we'd like to get on and try and make everybody happy."[41]

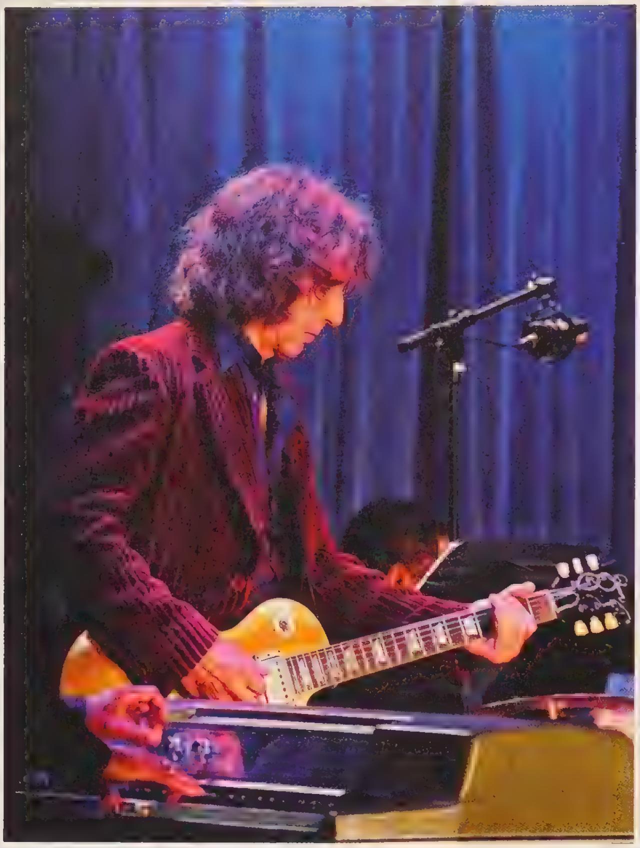
having come into existence in Barnes. Robert Plant recalls: "From what little I can remember of the subsequent recording sessions at Olympic Studios in London, it was a case of using mic placement and the right engineers to capture the rawness, energy and attitude of each track. Sometimes it was a bit of a struggle, but we did things quickly and were serious about making something pretty as well as powerful."[40] Andy Johns confirms the sense of urgency with which they recorded: "Those guys worked really fast. You could get two tracks an evening and not be working too late. We did one or two mixes, just Jimmy and myself. He was really easy to get on with."[41]

After Olympic, Led Zeppelin chose Island Studios. Established at the beginning of 1970 by the charismatic Chris Blackwell in premises shared by his own record company, Island Records, the studios were renamed Basing Street in 1975 and went on to attract many of the top acts in rock music: Bob Marley, the Rolling Stones, Traffic, Jethro Tull, Genesis, and Dire Straits, to name just a few.

Led Zeppelin booked both Island studios for two sessions, on July 5 and 6. The group made a strong impression on Richard Digby-Smith, who was there: "You knew you were in the presence of greatness. Look behind you and there was Peter Grant sitting on the sofa. The whole of the sofa! There was hugeness about everything they did."[41]

Memphis Mix

The story of Led Zeppelin's third album does not end there, however. The overdubs and mixing were done in the United States in August during the group's sixth American tour (August 15 to September 19). Ardent Studios in Memphis, Tennessee, had been established at the end of the fifties by the sound engineer and producer John Fry (founder of the Ardent Records and Ardent Music labels). It was during the course of the following decade, however, after Fry had exchanged the basement of his own house for a building on National Street, that the studios began to build a solid reputation for themselves, thanks in particular to Isaac Hayes, who recorded *Hot Buttered Soul* (1969) there, attracting a stream of rock and soul luminaries including the Staple Singers, Sam & Dave, Leon Russell, Bob Dylan, and, more recently, the White Stripes.



According to the musician and guitar collector Perry Margouleff (shown here in 2014), Jimmy Page used an RCA BA-6A compressor in the sessions for the third album.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Jimmy Page and Terry Manning had been friends since Dick Clark's Caravan of Stars tour in 1966. Alongside the Yardbirds, a Memphis group called Four More, with whom Manning played the guitar, had been guests on the tour. A little while later, Manning got a call from Page asking him to come to London with his bassist Joe Gaston to form a band with singer Terry Reid. Page received a polite refusal from Manning, who by then had his first hits for Stax.

A number of producers and sound engineers were working for Ardent Studios (and simultaneously for Stax) at this time. One of them was Terry Manning, to whom the Staple Singers, Otis Redding, and Isaac Hayes owed a number of their hits. Manning had known Jimmy Page for several years, since the Yardbirds era, and followed Led Zeppelin (whom he had seen several times onstage) with great interest. So it was only logical that he should be the one chosen to mix *Led Zeppelin III*. "Jimmy asked me if I could finish the mixing editing and mastering in Memphis," explains Terry Manning to Phil Sutcliffe. "The band had a major tour going on but the album still wasn't finished. I was delighted to do this […]. Most of the drum and bass work was already done. Page sometimes came with Plant and sometimes on his own—aside from Peter Grant, who was always with them. I was totally blown away by the music itself. I already loved the first two albums. The switch to adding more acoustic music worked really well."[41]

Technical Details

While the musicians were at Bron-Yr-Aur, they did not, of course, have any sophisticated recording equipment with them. Robert Plant explains: "So there we were, up in the mountains with one of the very first Sony cassette recorders and a bunch of Ever Ready batteries, just sitting going: 'Well, what shall we do?'"[40] The portable Sony cassette recorder was perhaps a TC-50 or a TC-100. For the next stage in the making of the album, they would avail themselves of the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. Brought into service by the Stones for their own use at the end of January 1970, this studio in a truck would be used over the years by many a group to make many a masterpiece: *200 Motels* (1971) by Frank Zappa, *Machine Head* (1972) by Deep Purple, *Rock & Roll Music to the World* (1972) by Ten Years After, *Moonflower* (1977) by Santana, not to forget *Sticky Fingers* (1971) and *Exile on Main St.* (1972) by the Stones themselves. The mobile studio's equipment included a sixteen-track 3M tape recorder, an eight-track Ampex, and a twenty-channel console designed by the brilliant Dick Swettenham, the designer of the Helios consoles.

The four members of Led Zeppelin got together at Olympic Studios in May. This time they would not make do with Studio One alone, but would also take over Studio Two, equipped with a custom-built console that was another example of the work of the omnipresent and exceptionally talented Swettenham.

Island Studios, located in a former church at 8–10 Basing Street, London, also had two studios: Studio One, which could accommodate up to eighty musicians and was equipped with a superb Helios console with

Led Zeppelin was one of the star attractions at the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music on June 28, 1970.

twenty-eight input and sixteen output channels, and the more modest Studio Two, which had another Helios console with twenty inputs and sixteen outputs. All the tape recorders (sixteen-, eight-, and two-track) were 3Ms, and the monitors were Tannoy Reds fitted in Lockwood cabinets. The effects included the unrivaled EMT 140 plate reverb, UREI 1176 limiters, and Pultec equalizers.

At Ardent Studios in Memphis, it seems the console used for the mix was a Spectra Sonics/Auditronics unit with twenty-four input channels, the tape recorder a 3M sixteen-track, the monitors JBL 4350, and an EMT 140 plate reverb providing the reverb. At Led Zeppelin's request, the studio also purchased a brand-new piece of kit, as John Fry explains: "We'd bought our first Dolby noise-reduction system because Led Zeppelin had required it when Terry [Manning] was mixing the *Led Zeppelin III* album, and this consisted of the huge old A301s."[48]

Finally, for the recording of his acoustic guitar parts, Jimmy Page was hugely impressed by the sound of the album *Adventures for 12-String, 6-String and Banjo* by Dick Rosmini (released in 1964), and was determined to use the same preamp as the folk guitarist: "I used an Altair Tube Limiter [...]. I'd never heard an acoustic guitar sound quite like that. I bumped into him in the States, and he said the whole secret of his studio sound was the Altair."[9] Despite his insistence on the name of the device, however, it seems that Page may have got it wrong. The producer Steve Albini, who recorded the studio album *Walking into Clarksdale* with Page and Plant in 1998, recalls that the guitarist brought along an RCA BA-6A compressor and told him he had used it on *Led Zeppelin III*. Perry Margouleff, the famous collector of guitars, producer, and founder of Pie Studios on Long Island, New York, tells the same story. As for Terry Manning, the engineer has no memory of what Page used at Ardent Studios. So who is right...?

The Team

Terry Manning and Andy Johns were the two sound engineers on *Led Zeppelin III*. But they were obviously

A 1961 Fender Jazz Bass identical to the 1962 model used by John Paul Jones.

THE THEFT OF THE "BLACK BEAUTY"

On March 21, 1970, while Led Zeppelin were preparing to open their fifth North American tour at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver, a thief helped himself to one of Jimmy Page's favorite guitars, his 1960 Gibson Les Paul Custom "Black Beauty." Bought for £185 in 1962, Page had used this guitar on numerous recordings as a session musician up to 1966. Previously he had avoided taking it on tour with Led Zeppelin. Sadly, he had changed his mind for this particular trip. Dismayed by its loss, he placed an ad in *Rolling Stone* offering a reward for its recovery, but to no avail.

helped by assistants, some of whom we have been able to partially identify. At Olympic Studios there were Dave (?), Chris Kimsey (who would enjoy a remarkable career as a sound engineer and producer), and Jeremy (?). At Island Studios, Bob Potter and Richard Digby-Smith, the latter having been described as merely an observer at the sessions. (Phill Brown has said Digby-Smith was a courier and driver at the time.) Finally, the track "Poor Tom," an outtake from these sessions that can be found on *Coda*, was mixed by Stuart Epps at "The Sol" studio in Cookham, Berkshire, in February 1982.

The Instruments

For this third album, new instruments make an appearance. John Bonham abandoned his Ludwig "Natural Maple" kit for another Ludwig, a "Green Sparkle" identical to the one he had played in Band of Joy and A Way of Life before joining Led Zeppelin. This comprised a bass drum (26x14), a medium tom (14x10), two floor toms (16x16 and 18x16), and the same Supraphonic snare drum and Paiste cymbals as his previous kit. Richard Digby-Smith would later reveal that "Bonham's drumming was so loud he never took the front skin off and put coats in like a lot of drummers."[41] As for percussion, Bonzo plays congas, castanets, spoons, tambourine, and presumably maracas too.

John Paul Jones remains faithful by and large to his 1962 Fender Jazz Bass, although he also used a violin-shaped 1953 Gibson EB-1 bass similar to Paul McCartney's Höfner 500/1. He can be seen holding this

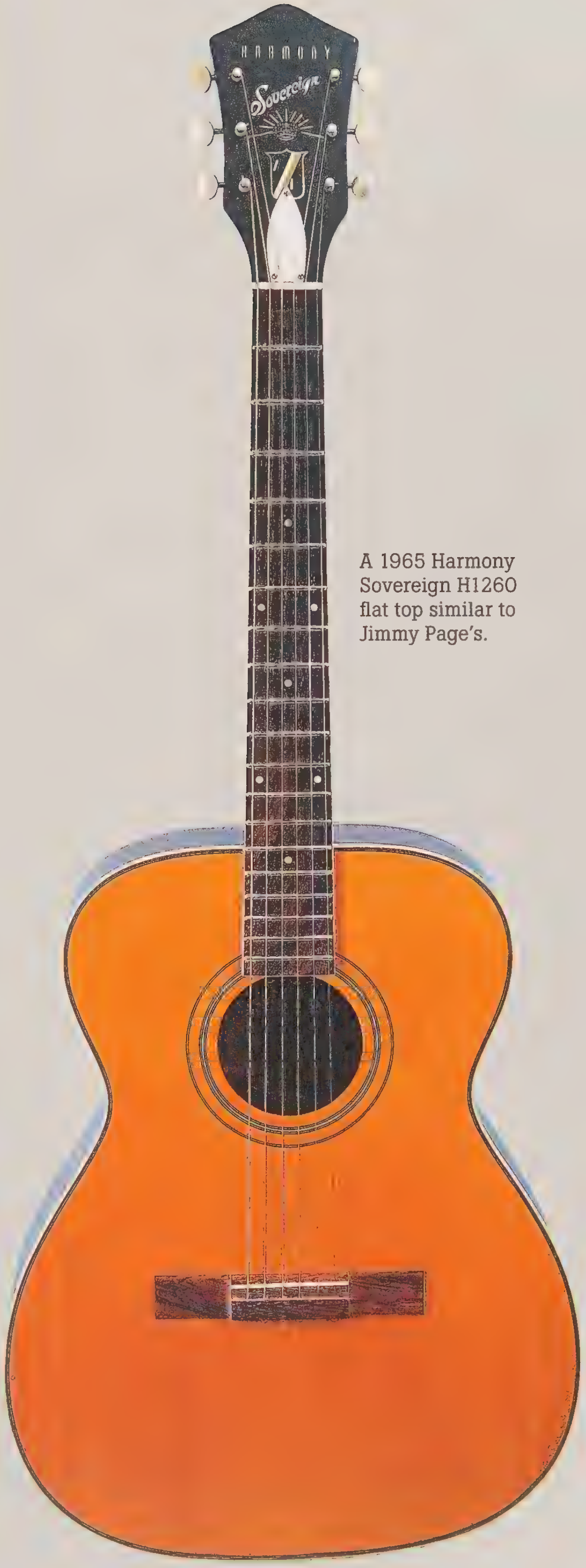
THE RETURN OF THE "BLACK BEAUTY"

Against all expectations, it seems that Jimmy Page's "Black Beauty" has now been found. Rumors had been circulating since April 2016, and then one of the group's former roadies, Henry "The Horse" Smith, revealed on a Facebook page one day: "Glad to announce the Black Beauty is now back in the hands of Jimmy, thanks in part to [producer/musician/collector] Perry Margouleff. This happened just a few months ago. It was a happy day for me to see Jimmy get this back."[49] By all accounts an unidentified person had "inherited" the guitar from his uncle, who claimed Jimmy Page had given it to him in 1970.

bass in one of the photographs on the sleeve image rotator. On "Celebration Day" Jones also picks up an eight-string bass, a 1968 Hagstrom H8, which he would later use on *Presence* in 1976. Finally, on "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp," he plays an acoustic bass—sadly unidentified—from which he has removed the frets. His amp was a Marshall 1959SLP with a Marshall 1982B baffle. As a multi-instrumentalist, Jones has expanded his sonic palette through the addition of a C. F. Martin A-style mandolin bought while on an American tour. "I'd probably learned my first mandolin tunes from Fairport Convention's *Liege and Lief*,"[47] he explains. Finally, on the keyboard side, he sticks with his Hammond C-3, played through a Leslie 147 speaker.

In the electric category, Jimmy Page continues to favor his Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One," generally played through his Marshall 1959SLP, but also turns to a Vox guitar (AC30? UL4120?) most likely paired with his Supro combo. The Fender 800 pedal steel guitar used on the first album can be heard again. His preferred acoustic is his Harmony Sovereign H1260 flattop, but he also plays a twelve-string, possibly a Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola. From his bandmate John Paul Jones he borrows a Vega PS-5 Long Neck banjo for "Gallows Pole," the only time the instrument can be heard on any of the group's records. On "That's the Way" he tries his hand at the dulcimer.

Finally, either Jones or Page uses a Moog synthesizer, most likely the Moog IIIP, to create a musical link between "Friends" and "Celebration Day."



A 1965 Harmony Sovereign H1260 flat top similar to Jimmy Page's.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The phrase *hammer of the gods* (which *will drive our ships to new lands*) inspired rock journalists to characterize the music of Led Zeppelin as something heavy and metallic.

IMMIGRANT SONG

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 2:26

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 29, 1970 (Studio Two)
Mixing
Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Chris Kimsey
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

It was in error that "Immigrant Song" was released in Japan with "Out on the Tiles" on the B-side instead of "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do"—an "error" much sought after by collectors ever since.

Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, celebrated by Robert Plant in "Immigrant Song" as the "land of the ice and snow."

Genesis

The *land of the ice and snow* in "Immigrant Song" (working title: "Song in F") is a direct reference to a concert that the government of Iceland invited Led Zeppelin to play on June 22, 1970 (at Laugardalshöll Sports Center in Reykjavik). Robert Plant explains: "We were invited to play a concert in Reykjavik and the day before we arrived all the civil servants went on strike and the gig was going to be cancelled. The university prepared a concert hall for us and it was phenomenal. The response from the kids was remarkable and we had a great time. 'Immigrant Song' was about that trip..."[50]

Robert Plant is fascinated with history, and in this song he combines Led Zeppelin's thrilling experience of the island nation with one of the most violent chapters in the history of the British Isles: the Viking invasion that began in the eighth century. *We come [...] from the midnight sun where the hot springs flow/The hammer of the gods will drive our ships to new lands*. Plant evokes the people of Scandinavia, explorers, warriors, merchants, and...pagans who covered vast distances in their longships, sowing chaos and destruction wherever they went. He even mentions Valhalla, the final resting place, where they would be watched over by the god Odin, of the valiant Vikings who had fallen in battle. Might Plant at the same time be likening *the hordes* they fight while singing and crying to the group's fans? Perhaps, in which case Plant, Page, Jones, and Bonham would be the *overlords* whose *only goal will be the western shore*...Could this mean distant America? It is not out of the question. In 2006, Robert Plant would have something more to say about the original intention behind his lyrics, which were apparently misinterpreted by the public: "'Immigrant Song' was supposed to be powerful *and* funny. People go, 'Zeppelin had a sense of humor?'"[47] He also saw fit to distance himself from the impact the words had on a certain section of the public: "Of course, it ended up spawning generations of

COVERS

After obtaining authorization from Led Zeppelin, the actor Jack Black performs a highly individual version of "Immigrant Song" in Richard Linklater's movie *School of Rock* (2003), as do Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross, and Karen O on the soundtrack of David Fincher's *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011). Also worth mentioning are versions by Dark Angel (*Leave Scars*, 1989) and Nirvana (*With the Lights Out*, 2004).

In June 1970, Led Zeppelin headlined the Bath Festival, where other acts included Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane, and the Mothers of Invention. Robert Plant is shown here opening with "Immigrant Song."

John Paul Jones and John Bonham at the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music, one of the outstanding rock events of the seventies. An incredible rhythm section at work.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At 1:44, Robert Plant can be heard uttering the *s* sound before continuing with his vocal (*So now you'd better stop*). This is either an earlier track or a doubling that had been rejected and badly erased. Clearly the effect struck Jimmy Page's ears as too musical not to retain in the final mix.

Link Wray, the inspiration behind some of Jimmy Page's chords on "Immigrant Song," plays on Alain Bashung's album *Chatterton*, released in 1994.

guys with crossed axes tattooed on their arms. It's slightly funny now."[40]

"Immigrant Song," which opens *Led Zeppelin III*, received its first live performance at the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music on June 28, 1970, where the band achieved a real breakthrough in their home country. The song would be used to open the group's shows up to and including the North American tour of 1972 (and would subsequently be performed in Japan in 1972 and Europe in 1973). It was released as a single (with "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" on the flip side) in many territories (a notable exception being the United Kingdom) in November 1970, reaching number 3 in Denmark; number 4 in Canada, Switzerland, and New Zealand; number 6 in West Germany; and number 16 in the United States (where it remained on the Billboard chart for thirteen weeks). It is interesting to note that under pressure from Atlantic, clearly wanting a successor to "Whole Lotta Love," "Immigrant Song" had already been earmarked as the group's next single as early as the end of 1969. There was even an acetate cut (number 2091 043), which, on the same side, bears the whole of Aleister Crowley's phrase "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." This particular piece of recording history is now worth over $30,000.

Production

"It felt right for the album to have a rocky side and a folky side—and the rocky side clearly had to start with Immigrant Song. With that hypnotic riff and Robert's bloodcurdling scream, I thought: 'That's the way to open an album,'"[40] Page told the *Guardian* in 2014.

It begins curiously: with a count-in, presumably from John Bonham, accompanied by the opening of five tracks in succession (including the first beat of the first bar), generating significant amounts of tape noise. Page explains: "The hiss at the beginning is a tape build-up [...]. It's not really tape hiss, it's echo feed-back."[51] More specifically, it is probably tape feedback from his Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo. The effect of this unusual intro is to rapidly build tension, which is immediately shattered by an explosion from Bonham on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" kit. He smacks his drums with awesome power and once again gives a display of staggering kick drum and killer crash cymbal. An initial guitar part from Jimmy Page can be heard on the left of the stereo field, mildly distorted by his Marshall 1959SLP. Page plays the track's main riff, which is simple and effective and underlined by Bonzo's footwork.

In surges Robert Plant with a characteristic scream. Double-tracked and positioned on either side of the stereo field, his lead vocal immediately assumes something of a theatrical air, somewhat recalling the tune of "Bali Ha'i," a song from Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's musical *South Pacific* (1949). As Plant launches into the first line of the lyrics, Page enters with a second rhythm guitar part (on the right), played with a very pronounced tremolo obtained most likely from an amp of the Supro or Vox AC30 kind. He would later explain that "Rumble," an instrumental single released by the guitarist Link Wray in 1958, inspired those two chords. It is interesting to note that at the end of Wray's track there is also some prominent tremolo...Page makes highly effective use of the effect here to strikingly launch Plant's lead vocal. The singer brilliantly delivers his lyrics, alternating between gentleness and fury in a masterful enactment of the song's different moods. He doubles himself everywhere except in the two verses.

Instead of coming in at the same time as the drums, John Paul Jones, on bass, waits for the first verse to come around (0:24). This delay increases the impact of his bass line, which effectively serves to relaunch the

number. Jones replicates the riff played by Jimmy Page, who in turn reinforces Jones's Jazz Bass by doubling it with a third rhythm guitar part positioned in the middle of the stereo image. This part may be pretty recessed in the mix, but it provides the bass with considerable support thanks to its edgier, metallic sonority. In the refrains, Jones delivers a superb and unusual bass line that creates the impression of quickening the pace (from 0:46, for example). Playing with a pick, his lightning speed, in conjunction with Bonham's groove and Page's guitars, lends this extraordinary song an incredible driving beat.

Finally, throughout the whole of the coda (from 1:40), Robert Plant delivers a freer interpretation, harmonizing at times in three voices (1:52). As Jimmy Page explains, the original idea was to improvise vocally in the closing section. This can be heard on CD2 of the deluxe edition of the album. "I thought it was important to show some of the bigger ideas that we decided not to pursue," remarks Page. "Toward the end of 'Immigrant Song,' for example, you hear an interesting experiment with vocal harmonies that we ultimately decided against."[15] Traces of this remain on the official version of the track. At precisely 2:09 Plant can be made out improvising furtively in the distance with ample reverb. Something else to note is that Page implements a highly effective harmonic change (for example at 1:59) by means of a "mystery" chord, which, in his words, "people never get right […]."[9] He then adds reverse echo in order to heighten the tension. The guitarist continues: "[…] where did that unusual G chord come from? I didn't have that chord when I started writing the 'Immigrant Song,' but it suddenly appeared while we were working together, putting on a massive brake to this machine [in other words, the rhythm of the track]."[9] It seems the mysterious chord is a simple barre chord on the third fret (G C F B-flat D G).

Exceptionally, it is Bonham who brings the track to a close with his crash cymbal, which is left to resonate by itself for a good four seconds before the start of the next track ("Friends").

"Immigrant Song" is one of the group's masterpieces, showcasing Jimmy Page's various talents as a composer, guitarist, arranger, and producer, as well as highlighting the extraordinary contribution of his three bandmates, who brilliantly demonstrate Led Zeppelin to be one of the best bands in the history of rock music.

Jimmy Page playing his Harmony Sovereign on the balcony of his house in Pangbourne by the River Thames.

FRIENDS

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:55

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars, Moog synthesizer (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, string arrangements, Moog synthesizer (?)
John Bonham: congas
Unidentified Musicians: strings, backing vocals (?)
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: June 3 and 5, 1970 (Studio One)
Mixing
Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineers: Jeremy (?), Chris Kimsey
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

Jimmy Page has once again deliberately retained the beginning of a badly erased track. At 2:36 Plant can be heard uttering *Mmm* before launching into his vocal line.

Genesis

In the book *Jimmy Page by Jimmy Page*, the Led Zeppelin guitarist reveals that he composed "Friends" (working title: "My My Oh My") on the balcony of his house in Pangbourne. He has also told Daniel Rachel that the idea came to him after an argument with his girlfriend, the resulting emotion inspiring the music. Page explains that he felt he just had "to release this somehow."[19] He was not responsible for the lyrics, however, confirming: "Again Robert wrote the words. He did them all except 'Tangerine.'"[52]

"Friends" is therefore a song about love and friendship, or more specifically about the distress caused by a breakup with a loved one or the end of a long relationship with a dear friend. *Had a friend, she once told me: "You got love, you ain't lonely,"* sings Robert Plant. The singer does not include himself among those who are suffering; he is more an observer of the ills of a selfish world, *Met a man on the roadside crying, without a friend there's no denying*, and offers the following pieces of advice: *So anytime somebody needs you, don't let them down although it grieves you* and *the greatest thing you ever can do now is trade a smile with someone who's blue now*. Jimmy Page would comment wryly on the premise of the song: "Considering the song's origins, it's ironic that it ended up being called 'Friends' [*laughs*]."[9]

Production

Turning to the music, "Friends" is the only acoustic number on the "electric" side of *Led Zeppelin III*. Jimmy Page wrote it on his Harmony Sovereign H1260. Plant would somewhat enigmatically justify its inclusion among the album's rock songs by explaining: "It might be acoustic instrumentation, but it's the venom or the bite or the drive, or it's the life or it's just what comes from behind. Things like 'Friends' could never be done electrically with so much balls."[53]

Crosby, Stills & Nash, the embodiment of California soft rock. Led Zeppelin sounds a little like them on "Friends."

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

In March 1972, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant recorded "Friends" with the Bombay Orchestra. (This version can be found on the deluxe version of *Coda*, released in 2015, featuring an arrangement for Indian instruments Page had presumably imagined for *Led Zeppelin III*.) Reasonably little performed by Led Zeppelin, the song was taken up again by Page and Plant for *No Quarter: Jimmy Page and Robert Plant Unledded*, an acoustic concert recorded by MTV and released on CD in October 1994.

Although this number reveals the influence of Indian music on Jimmy Page, one that dates from his first trip to India, during the Yardbirds era, it is also reminiscent of the folk-rock atmosphere of the Californian scene, and in particular the artistic community of Laurel Canyon (Crosby, Stills & Nash; Joni Mitchell; Neil Young). The guitarist has denied any musical relationship of this kind, but listening to "Friends," one inevitably thinks of "Carry On" (the opening track of the album *Déjà Vu*, 1970), even if Page's open-C6 tuning (C A C G C E) differs from the E-flat tonality of Stephen Stills's song.

"Friends" does not open with Page's guitar, however. As with "Immigrant Song," a number of tracks can be heard opening in succession, with their characteristic tape hiss, this time combined with talking in the studio. After a few seconds, Andy Johns can be heard saying *Shhh!* through his talk-back mic, bringing the chatter to an end. Page then launches the song on his Harmony Sovereign. As we have already mentioned, he uses a C6 tuning, common among players of pedal steel guitar. The strings ring out, and the lowest, C, can be heard vibrating against the fretboard as a result of the released tension. He adds a second guitar part that provides the melody and doubles the rising motif played on the first guitar. Page has said that in recording this track he used the same Altair Tube Limiter as the folk guitarist Dick Rosmini. However, as we have already suggested, it seems more likely to have been an RCA BA-6A limiter/compressor (see "The Instruments" section on page 160).

Abandoning his Ludwig kit, John Bonham provides a rhythm accompaniment on the congas, as he does on "Whole Lotta Love." He is joined on bass by John Paul Jones, who is particularly outstanding on this track. Jones has exchanged his Jazz Bass for a 1953 Gibson EB-1 whose gentler, softer sound is better suited to the mood of "Friends." Jimmy Page confirms: "[…] that's bottle-neck string bass with John Paul playing."[52] In addition to playing his Gibson, the bassist and multi-instrumentalist is also responsible for a very effective string arrangement. Page has explained that the original idea was to use musicians who could play in an Indian style, but none could be found, and the string parts had to be changed at the last moment. Jones is an arranger of great subtlety, and his writing reinforces the darker side of Page's harmonies. This can be heard particularly clearly toward the end of the song, where the string arrangement resembles Harry Robinson's for Nick Drake's "River Man" (1969), a wonderful, but not especially uplifting song…It seems that in two places backing vocals support the strings (around 1:16 and 2:36). "There's a bit of drama to it,"[9] says Page, and this drama owes a great deal to Robert Plant's astonishing vocal performance. The singer demonstrates a

Led Zeppelin onstage in Copenhagen on February 28, 1970.

disconcerting facility for reaching even the highest notes in a head voice rather than a falsetto, thereby generating a permanent tension. He doubles his lead vocal and harmonizes with himself at the end of each verse.

"Friends" draws to a close with the sound of a Moog synthesizer (probably the Moog IIIP), which rises steadily in volume during the outro (from 3:28). This was not part of the original plan, but following a mistake by an assistant engineer, who unfortunately erased the beginning of the drum part of the next track, "Celebration Day," Jimmy Page had the idea of linking the two tracks with a sustained note on the Moog. "That's called salvaging,"[9] he explains. The note gradually gets louder and modulates from C (the key of "Friends") to A (that of "Celebration Day"), accompanied by reasonably strong reverb.

"Friends" and "Immigrant Song" were the first two tracks Jimmy Page wrote for *Led Zeppelin III*. Although diametrically opposed in terms of their basic concept, they share the oriental and Indian sonorities that were dear to the guitarist. Moreover, they are two of the group's most successful tracks and can be seen as prefiguring "Kashmir" on *Physical Graffiti* (1975).

CELEBRATION DAY

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones / 3:30

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars, Moog synthesizer (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, Moog synthesizer (?)
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: June 3, 1970 (Studio One)
Mixing
Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy (?)
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

Celebration Day is also the title of a movie by Dick Carruthers of the concert given by Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and Jason Bonham at the O2 Arena in London on December 10, 2007, in memory of Ahmet Ertegun. It was shown in selected theaters from October 2012 before being released on DVD, and the audio on CD, the following month.

Genesis

In "Celebration Day" we are a very long way from the Viking epic of "Immigrant Song" and even further from the bucolic atmosphere of Page and Plant's Welsh retreat following their return from the North American tour. Through both the power of the words and the fury of the music, this third track on Led Zeppelin's third album evokes a United States of disturbing paradoxes: a promised land beset by racism and violence. "Celebration Day" is about New York City as experienced by the four young British men, and during the North American tour of 1971, Robert Plant would indeed introduce it as their "New York song." The heroine, whose *face is cracked from smiling*, could perhaps be the Statue of Liberty, which stands at the mouth of the Hudson River, close to Ellis Island, once the point of entry for immigrants into the United States. She could also, and this is perhaps more likely, be a groupie who has fallen under the spell of Page, Plant, Jones, or Bonham, a groupie whose *voice is sore from shouting*. Initially the third-person singular is used, but in the second verse this changes to the first-person singular and the first-person plural: *I'm so happy, I'm gonna join the band/We're gonna dance and sing in celebration, we are in the promised land*.

The first part of the song could therefore be seen as a kind of immersion in the daily life of a groupie, in the world of rock 'n' roll at the dawn of the seventies. The second part evokes a different reality, the violence that was rife in the major urban centers: *You hear her cries of mercy as the winners toll the bell*. And the third part is even darker. For Plant, there seems to be no way out: *There's a train that leaves the station heading for your destination/But the price you pay to nowhere has increased a dollar more*.

Production

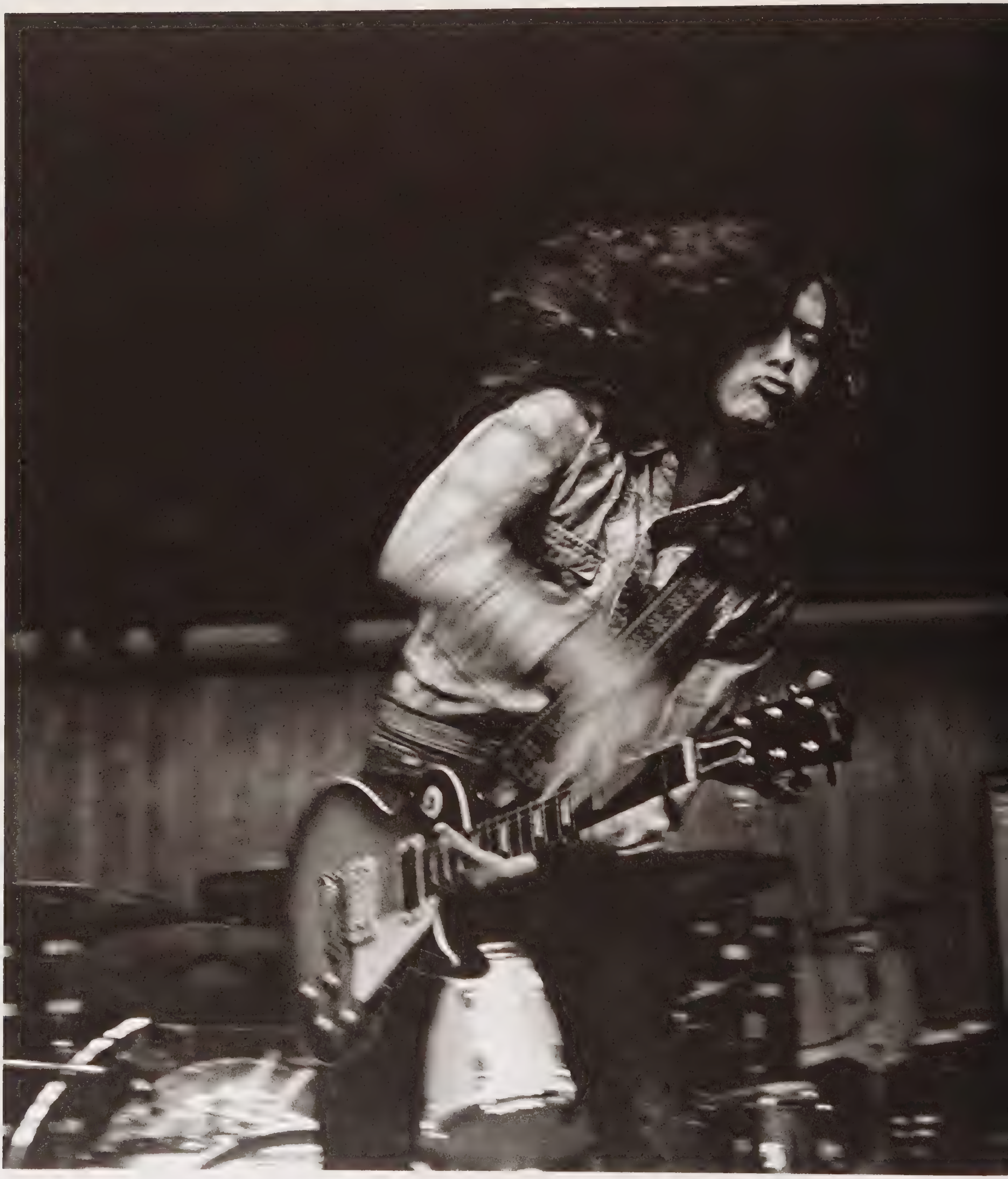
Just like the lyrics, the music of "Celebration Day" reflects a schizophrenic United States. "There's about

LED-ZEPPELIN
CELEBRATION DAY

Press conference for the release of *Celebration Day* given by the three members of Led Zeppelin plus Jason Bonham in New York on October 9, 2012.

three or four riffs going down on that one […]," explains Jimmy Page to *Guitar World*. "Half was done with a guitar in standard tuning and the other half was done on slide guitar tuned to an open A, I think. We put that together at Headley Grange. Because we rented the Rolling Stones' mobile recording studio, we could relax and take our time and develop the songs in rehearsals. We didn't have to worry about wasting studio time."[4] As for the intro, the link between "Friends" and "Celebration Day," Jimmy Page has always stuck to the same explanation for this: "[…] the rhythm track in the beginning of 'Celebration Day' was completely wiped by an engineer. I forget what we were recording, but I was listening through the headphones and nothing was coming through. I started yelling, 'What the hell is going on?' Then I noticed that the red recording light was on what used to be the drums. The engineer had accidently recorded over Bonzo! And that is why you have that synthesizer drone from the end of 'Friends' going into 'Celebration Day,' until the rhythm track catches up. We put that on to compensate for the missing drum track."[9] In this sense, "Celebration Day" can perhaps be considered the group's first lo-fi track! And just for the record, legend has it that the assistant sound engineer responsible for this enormous blunder immediately fled the studio, never to set foot in it again! It is also possible that the incident occurred during the overdubbing at Ardent Studios in Memphis, because otherwise Bonham could simply have redone his drum part. Another explanation, which comes from Terry Manning (who was in charge of the mixing) and is reported in Mick Wall's book *A Biography of Led Zeppelin: When Giants Walked the Earth*, is that no track was ever erased and the effect was intentional—a sign of Jimmy Page's boldness and brilliance as a producer.

"Celebration Day" was recorded mainly on June 3 in Studio One at Olympic in London, with Andy Johns at the controls and a certain Jeremy assisting. The unusual thing about the intro—apart from the technician's mistake—is that it begins with a riff played both by Jimmy Page on his Gibson Les Paul with generous fuzz (right-hand channel) and by John Paul Jones, who doubles the guitarist on an eight-string bass played slide (right-hand channel). More specifically, the instrument Jones is using is a 1968 Hagstrom H8, which has four courses of two strings tuned in octaves (on the same



Jimmy Page on his Les Paul Standard "Number One," giving an impassioned interpretation of "Celebration Day" at Copenhagen's KB Hallen in February 1970.

principle as an acoustic twelve-string). Along with the sonic background, consisting of a sustained note on the Moog IIIP, this creates a dense atmosphere.

Robert Plant opens the first verse in a quasi-intimate voice, and is then joined by Bonham with a reverse reverb effect (or at least a backward cymbal) that propels the rhythm forward in an unexpected and incredibly effective way (at 0:22). His drumming is impeccable as always, with a heavy hit and a stunning groove. Jones, whose Hagstrom eight-string becomes less present in the mix from the moment Bonzo enters (before apparently coming back in the outro), supports the drummer with a solid bass line on his Fender Jazz Bass. He uses a pick and delivers a superb accompaniment, both rhythmically and melodically, in the refrains. Meanwhile, Jimmy Page adds another Les Paul part in the verses, developing a second, clearer-toned riff (stereo left). In the refrains he plays slide (stereo right), in an open-A tuning (E A E A C-sharp E). After the second refrain he launches into an excellent solo, still on his Les Paul Standard "Number One," which he doubles and positions on either side of the stereo field in order to give it more prominence in the mix. Jimmy Page proves himself once again, as if proof were needed, to be an inspired guitarist. This solo is not of any great inherent technical difficulty but exhibits a remarkable intensity that combines simplicity, energy, and musicality. The phrases he plays are probably worked out in advance rather than improvised, and they possess an irresistible melodic appeal. Pure artistry!

Following a first verse in which he displays a certain restraint, Robert Plant then sheds all inhibitions in reaching for the highest notes with the biggest impact. It is interesting that he double-tracks himself in the refrains, but without any great care being taken over the synchronization of the two voices…

The track concludes with a reasonably long outro, lasting more than a minute, in which Plant improvises and Page repeats the same phrase all the way to the end on his Les Paul.

"Celebration Day" remains an underestimated track in the Led Zeppelin catalog, despite possessing certain qualities and an originality that mark it as a great song.

Robert Plant onstage. The singer delivers one of his most awe-inspiring vocal performances in "Since I've Been Loving You."

SINCE I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones / 7:25

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass pedals, organ
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: December 1969 (?) (Studio Two); June 5, 1970 (Studio One)
Island Studios, London: July 1970 (?)
Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970

Mixing

Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Chris Kimsey
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

Genesis

"Since I've Been Loving You" seems to have been sketched out at the time of *Led Zeppelin II*, although it was during the recording of the next album, after going through various configurations onstage, that it assumed its final form and went on to become one of the group's most renowned tracks and an expression of inspired collaboration. Indeed Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham performed a version of the song at their famous concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London on January 9, 1970 (included on the DVD *Led Zeppelin*). "The problem with it was that the keyboard didn't get recorded, so there's only the guitar, the drums, and the voice, which is really unfortunate—otherwise we'd had a good version,"[9] explains Jimmy Page.

The lyrics of "Since I've Been Loving You" tell the story, or rather narrate the stations of the cross, of a man, the *best of fools*, who works *from seven to eleven every night* in order to satisfy the desires of the woman he loves. He loves her so much, in fact, that he's prepared to sell his soul to the devil for her, in the face of all those who tell him she's unworthy of him. The man is in love, then, but at the same time he is filled with an infinite unhappiness: *My tears they fell like rain*, complains the protagonist.

Robert Plant, the author of the lyrics, has borrowed almost word for word the first few lines of "Never," a song by Bob Mosley (vocals, bass), which opens *Grape Jam*, one of the two albums that constitute Moby Grape's second release, *Wow/Grape Jam* (April 1968). Compare *Working from eleven to seven every night/Ought to make life a drag, now I know that ain't right* and *I've been to see the best of fools* (Moby Grape) with *Working from seven to eleven every night/It really makes life a drag/I don't think that's right* and *I've really been the best, the best of fools* (Led Zeppelin). This is clearly no coincidence. Moby Grape was one of the best of the acid-rock groups (along with Jefferson Airplane and the

Moby Grape. Left to right: Bob Mosley, Jerry Miller, Don Stevenson, Peter Lewis, and Skip Spence. There's an uncanny similarity between the lyrics of "Never" and those of "Since I've Been Loving You."

Grateful Dead) at the end of the sixties, and Plant is known to have had an interest in this style of music ever since his Band of Joy days. What's more, the Led Zeppelin song bears a clear resemblance to Moby Grape's "Never" in its mood, tempo, and meter.

More generally, "Since I've Been Loving You" fits into the long tradition of the blues, in this case a blues in minor mode. Should the song also be seen as borrowing from B. B. King and the West Side Sound of Otis Rush and Magic Sam? In reality, as is so often the case with Led Zeppelin, it is more a re-creation of, or even tribute to, a style of music that is thereby transformed into an authentic Led Zeppelin work. "There was a lot of blues on the first album, but we would have never ventured to play something as unusual or sophisticated as 'Since I've Been Loving You,'"[9] Jimmy Page tells Brad Tolinski. And when asked by *Guitar World* whether it is a "typical blues,"[4] the guitarist replies: "Well, it all depends on how you define the blues. Everybody immediately locks into 12 bars, but I do not think it has to have 12 bars to have that emotive quality."[4]

Production

"Since I've Been Loving You" is the only song on *Led Zeppelin III* that the quartet performed live before laying it down in the studio. "Yet it was the hardest to record,"[4] recalls Jimmy Page. "We had maybe two attempts at recording it at two different locations. The intro changed subtly every time we'd play it—certainly from one studio to another—but it had that characteristic first opening [...] But beyond that, it was more of a vehicle to push the envelope than playing to please the blues purists."[9]

The first session for "Since I've Been Loving You," although producing no significant outcome, seems to have taken place in December 1969. It was on June 5, 1970, again at Olympic Studios, that the group recorded a proper first version of the track (which is included on CD2 of the deluxe edition of the album). According to

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

According to the online magazine *Perfect Sound Forever*, in 2005 Bob Mosley won an out-of-court settlement confirming his contribution to "Since I've Been Loving You." However, the agreement did not require his name to be added as co-composer.

While "Since I've Been Loving You" is filled with emotion, it is also filled with the sound of squeaks from John Bonham's bass drum. It is particularly noticeable during the introduction, prompting Jimmy Page to say, "It sounds louder each time I hear it!"

Richard Digby-Smith, who was present, Led Zeppelin continued to work on the recording at a second London studio, Island, in July. This is corroborated by Jimmy Page's comments about two takes being recorded in two different studios. The guitar solo was eventually laid down at Ardent Studios in Memphis in August with Terry Manning engineering.

Drawing on African American Music

Five notes on the guitar. Five notes played by Jimmy Page with palpable emotion on his Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One." "That's quite a traditional way to open up a blues, on those first few notes, isn't it?"[9] the guitarist would later remark, with a touch of humor. Although only occurring in the introduction, these five notes, more effective than a riff, can be seen as summing up "Since I've Been Loving You" all by themselves. Nevertheless, these five notes were not the guitarist's original creation; they were borrowed from the intro to "New York City Blues" by the Yardbirds, written by Keith Relf and released in 1966 as the B-side of the single "Shapes of Things," with Page's former colleague Jeff Beck on guitar. It should be pointed out that those five notes are all the two songs have in common.

Some people would accuse Page of having plagiarized the melody, in addition to the lyrics, of Moby Grape's "Never." However, while Robert Plant's borrowing of certain words is beyond dispute, the same cannot be said of the music. Moby Grape's superb song is a stripped-down, mid-tempo blues featuring the fabulous guitar of Jerry Miller, who improvises throughout. While this general mood may have inspired Page, the harmonic development of the Led Zeppelin number is infinitely richer. "Never" is based on two chords (E minor and A minor), quite unlike "Since I've Been Loving You." As Robert Plant explains, the harmonic richness of the track is one of its great strengths: "I don't know where it came from [...] but the musical progression at the end of each verse—the chord choice—is not a natural place to go. And it's that lift up there that's so regal and so emotional. I don't know whether that was born from the loins of Jimmy or John Paul, but I know that when we reached that point in the song you could get a lump in the throat from being in the middle of it."[54] "Never" and "Since I've Been Loving You" are two blues numbers whose respective songwriters have drawn their inspiration from the incredible Black American tradition, as have many others...

With the exception of the voices and the solo in the middle, which were overdubbed, the version that can be heard on *Led Zeppelin III* is a "live" take recorded in the studio.

Following the five introductory notes on the guitar, the track lumbers into motion extremely sparely and continues that way for the first few bars. Jimmy Page improvises on his Les Paul, most likely played through his Marshall 1959SLP. His phrasing is truly inspired and his touch exceptionally emotionally intense. John Bonham accompanies him reasonably plainly on his Ludwig kit. He too displays great feeling, his drumming a model of groove and finesse. Page has said that in this kind of song no one but Bonzo would decide how to play, that Page in the role of producer would make the occasional suggestion concerning the use of percussion, but where the drumming as such was concerned, it was Bonham who had the last word. Bonzo is supported by John Paul Jones on bass, but not, this time, his Jazz Bass. Instead the multi-instrumentalist plays bass pedals in the form of

COVERS

Robert Plant and Jimmy Page reprised "Since I've Been Loving You" on their album *No Quarter* (1994) and in the concert *No Quarter: Unledded* (available on DVD, released 2004) with the London Metropolitan Orchestra. Other versions worth mentioning include those by Dennis Brown (*Inseparable*, 1988), the Jason Bonham Band (*In the Name of My Father—The Zepset—Live from Electric Ladyland*, 1997), and Great White (*Great Zeppelin: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin*, 1998).

"Since I've Been Loving You" would remain on Led Zeppelin's concert set list for years—up to 1980, in fact (sometimes as part of a medley with "Misty Mountain Hop," and sometimes with Jimmy Page's solo enhanced by the melody of "Tea for Two").

a Dewtron Mister Bassman pedal synthesizer. As the recording is live, this pedalboard gives him the freedom to play the organ at the same time. The texture of the notes and his playing differ from those of an electric bass, but the results are perfect in this context. During the instrumental opening, then, the harmonies are simply suggested by a few bass and guitar notes. "John Paul Jones was definitely integral to creating some of the chordal movement,"[9] confirms Page. Before long the organ makes its entrance, giving Jones an opportunity to display the full extent of his talent, and for its quality and musicality, his accompaniment on the Hammond C-3 (from 0:25) is nothing short of brilliant. Jimmy, meanwhile, delivers a dazzling guitar part that slowly cranks up the tension until it explodes in a series of superb blues-rock phrases at 0:48. The performance from these three musicians is simply outstanding. They can be heard feeling and moving together, in short, giving their very best. After this climax, the tension abates, leaving space for the vocal entry. And what a vocal!

Musicians of the Highest Caliber

Robert Plant is up there with the very best blues singers, his vocals possessing an erotic power comparable to a James Brown, an Otis Redding, or even a Janis Joplin. This vocal prowess of the Led Zeppelin singer made an indelible impression on Richard Digby-Smith, who witnessed the recording of the overdubs at Island Studios: "I can see Robert at the mike now. He was so passionate. Lived every line. What you got on the record is what happened. His only preparation was an herbal cigarette and a couple of shots of Jack Daniel's…"[47] This performance perhaps ranks as one of the pinnacles of Plant's achievement, and makes it difficult to believe that barely two years before, he had been unsure about his future in the music business…After two or three takes, he asked to check what had been laid down, and then returned to the mic to correct his imperfections. Of Plant's working relationship with Page during this process, Richard Digby-Smith provides the following insight: "I'd say it was a team effort but Jimmy Page had the final say. When Robert was singing, Page would be at the desk talking to Robert, not telling him what to do but working with him."[41]

The finishing touch is Jimmy Page's central solo. This, then, means that he plays two guitar parts on "Since I've Been Loving You." The first begins with the opening five notes of the introduction and continues unbroken to the very end of the piece. The second is the solo he plays from 3:38, launched by a resounding *Watch out!* from his friend Robert. Page was febrile. Despite having a number of tries, he was unable to achieve the desired result. "I had to deliver a solo that would live up to this incredible buildup," he explains. "It was like getting ready for a hundred-yard dash or something. Just vibing up for it, psyching myself up and coming up with some idea of how to get the solo off, and then…go!"[9] The solo was recorded at Ardent Studios in Memphis in the middle of August. Terry Manning retains a clear memory of the occasion: "'Since I've Been Loving You' was done in one take, through a forgotten brand amplifier that belonged to whatever group had been previously recording in the room. No knobs, tones, sounds, etc. Truly plug in and play. That's how good Jimmy Page was."[41] Manning has also described this performance as the "best rock guitar solo of all

John Paul Jones demonstrating his talent on the Hammond organ on "Since I've Been Loving You," with Jimmy Page accompanying.

time."[47] Page, meanwhile, maintains that he could have done better, claiming he is not one of those lucky guitarists whose every take is brilliant…

"Since I've Been Loving You" is probably the first Led Zeppelin track on which the group is able to present itself as an ensemble of musicians of the very highest caliber. Not only are they able to create hits and redefine the rock and blues canons, they demonstrate here that they are also able to scale the heights as instrumentalists and performers. Jimmy Page has said of this song: "It wasn't something that took forever and a day: it came together very quickly and it was perfect, with its sentiment and how it was approached."[40] All in all, an achievement that is accessible to everybody.

An Embarrassing Squeak

Although every note of "Since I've Been Loving You" is invested with intense emotion, this does not prevent John Bonham's bass pedal from squeaking throughout the entire track! This is particularly noticeable during the intro, giving Jimmy Page occasion to say: "It sounds louder and louder every time I hear it!"[9]

"Out on the Tiles" was based on a song that John Bonham liked to sing from time to time, a ditty in which the beer flows freely.

OUT ON THE TILES

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Bonham / 4:04

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: June 3, 1970 (Studio Two)

Mixing

Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy (?)
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

A voice can be heard shouting *Stop!* during the recording (1:23). This is probably Robert Plant setting some bearings for himself to help him structure the track. It is sometimes claimed that this exclamation was directed at an individual in the studio who was trying to distract him.

Genesis

Before being renamed "Out on the Tiles," this last track on the first side of *Led Zeppelin III* was called "Bathroom Song," for the simple reason that, upon hearing it, John Bonham had the impression his drum kit had been recorded in a bathroom.

Jimmy Page explains to Brad Tolinski how the song came about: "John Bonham had quite a bit to do with 'Out on the Tiles.' I wrote the opening descending riff, but the guitar part behind the vocal was based on a song he used to sing that went something like: 'Out on the tiles, I've had a pint of bitter / And I'm feeling better 'cause I'm out on the tiles' [...]."[9] Jimmy Page defines the British English expression "out on the tiles" as "slang for hitting the bars." He further explains: "And a bitter is a sort of dark pale ale. Robert's lyrics took it in a little different direction, but the vibe is still there."[9] The song is indeed less about the benefits of alcohol than about the magic of love. The protagonist claims to be a *simple guy* who lives *from day to day*. In a melancholic frame of mind, he describes what he wants from his *fine woman*: *All I need from you is all your love.*

There is a radical change of mood in the fifth verse, when the man, who has been languid up to this point, fails to understand why people in the street begin to come and go and *set the pace* at the mere sight of his girlfriend. The reason may lie in the innuendo-laden phrase *see my rider right by my side*. In the language of the blues, *see see rider* (or *c. c. rider* or even *easy rider*) refers to a woman of liberal views where love and sex are concerned and who is something of an expert in these arts...

Production

"Out on the Tiles" opens with a descending riff from Jimmy Page on his Gibson Les Paul. The sound is "live" but at the same time possesses a very rich texture that is attributable to more than just his Marshall

John Bonham, the archetypal rock drummer. He performed miracles on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" both onstage and in the studio.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Out on the Tiles" was only ever included in Led Zeppelin's set list during their sixth North American tour in autumn 1970. On the other hand, during their 1977 American tour, the beginning of the song was integrated into "Over the Top" (an alternative version of "Moby Dick") as the launchpad for John Bonham's epic twenty-minute drum solo! This introductory riff also served as the opening of the live version of "Black Dog," and was later resurrected during Page and Plant's world tours of 1995–96 and 1998. Jimmy Page also performed the song with the Black Crowes during their 1999–2000 tour.

1959SLP. The guitarist himself explains how the sound is recorded simultaneously close up and from afar in order to capture "the distance of the time lag from one end of the room to the other and putting that in as well. The whole idea, the way I see recording, is to try and capture the sound of the room live and the emotion of the whole moment and try to convey that. That's the very essence of it. And so, consequently, you've got to capture as much of the room sound as possible."[18] Thus a mic was placed in front of his amp and a pair of mics positioned at the far end of the studio in order to record the atmospheric sound in stereo. Hence the incredible sound. But his guitar is not the only instrument to benefit from such a technique: John Bonham's "Green Sparkle" is recorded in a similar way. And in the case of the drums, it is all the more evident because of the strong reverb applied at the mixing stage, generating the "bathroom sound" that gave rise to the working title of this track.

Bonzo's drumming is remarkable in every respect. With disconcerting ease he generates a funky groove that can be regarded as the very rhythmic signature—undeniably soul/R&B—of this talented drummer. John Paul Jones mainly accompanies Page's riff, the somewhat aggressive sound of his Jazz Bass, played with a pick and recorded by means of a mic on the amp, recalling to some extent that of "Heartbreaker" on the group's second album. In the refrains, while Page alternates chords and power chords, Jones underlines the harmonies in a fairly basic way while at the same time supporting Bonham's bass drum. Meanwhile, Robert Plant gives it some...well, some Robert Plant, his voice strained and high-pitched, perfect for a song of this extremely gutsy kind. He doubles-tracks and harmonizes with himself in the refrains in order to boost the power of his voice even further.

Finally, "Out on the Tiles," which, like "Immigrant Song," has no solo—something of a rarity for Led Zeppelin—ends with a relatively long outro (of more than thirty seconds' duration), giving Plant an opportunity to indulge in some improvisation while Bonham's Ludwig pans from side to side (from 3:00).

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Fred Gerlach (1925–2009) was a member of the folk scene of the fifties and sixties alongside Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Ramblin' Jack Elliott. It was Leadbelly who inspired him to take up the twelve-string guitar.

GALLOWS POLE

Traditional, arranged by Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:58

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six-string and twelve-string), electric guitars (rhythm and lead), banjo
John Paul Jones: bass, mandolin
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Island Studios, London: July 5, 1970 (Studio One)
Mixing
Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Bob Potter
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

Twelve-string bluesman Leadbelly with the folk singer Woody Guthrie. The Texan recorded this traditional song in 1939.

Genesis

"I first heard ['Gallows Pole'] on an old Folkways LP by Fred Gerlach, who was, I believe, the first white [man] to play the 12-string [guitar]," explains Jimmy Page. "I used his version as a basis [for our version] and completely changed the arrangement."[24]

The Fred Gerlach album that the Led Zeppelin guitarist cites as a model is called *Twelve-String Guitar* and was released by Folkways in 1962. But "Gallows Pole" predates the folk renaissance of the early sixties by some considerable time. In fact the origins of the English version of the song go back to a ballad of the second half of the eighteenth century (around 1770) called "The Maid Freed from the Gallows." This was "rediscovered" by the eminent folklorist (and Harvard professor) Francis James Child, who, at the end of the following century, included it in his anthology of 305 English and Scottish popular ballads known today as the "Child Ballads." This particular song could even be a lot older. For example one of the tracks on the album *The Wilderness Road and Jimmie Driftwood* (1959) is a fifteenth-century English ballad called "Slack Your Rope" (whose subject is the same as "The Maid Freed from the Gallows"). It is also worth pointing out that this melancholy song could even have its origins not in the British Isles but in continental Europe. It is known to have been popularized under the title "Den Bortsålda" in Sweden, "Nieida Kajon sis" in Lithuania, and "Fehér László lovat lopott" in Hungary.

"The Maid Freed from the Gallows" has inspired countless performers in the United States and the United Kingdom, from Judy Collins (under the title "Anathea") to Nic Jones ("Prickly Bush") via Jean Ritchie, Odetta, the Kingston Trio, Steeleye Span, and Neil Young. The most famous version, however, remains that of the Texan bluesman Leadbelly, recorded in 1939 for the Library of Congress, entitled "The Gallis Pole." This version was a major source of inspiration for Fred Gerlach.

Jimmy Page giving a superb rendering of "Gallows Pole" on his Harmony Sovereign H1260.

From Melancholy to Pathos

The words of "The Maid Freed from the Gallows," published by Francis James Child, tell the story of a young woman who faces the rope unless her family pays a ransom posthaste. After the successive failure of her father, her mother, her brother, and her sister to do so, it is eventually her devoted admirer who rescues her. The dramatic details of the ballad have continually evolved from one reinterpretation to the next. What barely changes from version to version are the means employed by, or expected from, his or her nearest and dearest in order to win the condemned a reprieve from the gallows: gold, silver, or even physical charms…Varied are the ways in which the judge or hangman can be bribed. Regarding the ending, in some cases there is a happy outcome and the execution is halted; in others the condemned woman or man swings.

Robert Plant has leaned toward the more macabre aspects of this traditional song that sits at the crossroads of blues and Appalachian music. A man is condemned to death. The wretched soul asks members of his family to bring a little silver or gold to keep him *from the gallows pole*. But what the wicked hangman wants is something else in addition to silver and gold. *Sister, I implore you, take him by the hand/Take him to some shady bower, save me from the wrath of this man.* We are given to understand that the young woman indeed uses her charms on the hangman, but is her brother saved as a result? The last few lines sung by Robert Plant are relentlessly cynical: *Your brother brought me silver and your sister warmed my soul/But now I laugh and pull so hard to see you swinging on the gallows pole.*

"Gallows Pole," this rereading of "The Maid Freed from the Gallows" said to be Jimmy Page's favorite song on *Led Zeppelin III*, was very rarely played in concert. The notable exceptions are: Madison Square Garden on September 19, 1970; Copenhagen on May 3, 1971; and in England, Liverpool and Ipswich on May 10 and November 16, 1971, respectively. It is also worth mentioning that Robert Plant integrated various phrases from "Gallows Pole" into his live performances of "Trampled Under Foot," which Page and Plant played on their MTV *Unledded* show, and of which Plant performed a bluegrass version on the 2010–11 Band of Joy tour.

Production

Thus the acoustic side of the album opens with an adaptation of a traditional folk song. "Gallows Pole" is one of

John Paul Jones with his Fender Jazz Bass, whose deep, warm sound plays an important part in "Gallows Pole."

Under the title "Seven Curses," Bob Dylan has recorded his own version of "Gallows Pole." Or, to be precise, two versions: first for Witmark in May 1963 and then for Columbia on August 6 that year. The heroine, who has stolen a stallion, is forced to submit to the desires of a judge in order to escape the ultimate penalty.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At the very end (5:16) of the alternative version on CD2 of the deluxe edition of *Led Zeppelin III*, Jimmy Page can be heard improvising a few notes of the famous "Brazil" by Ary Barroso. Could "Gallows Pole" lend itself to a samba reinterpretation?

the songs Jimmy Page had in his head when setting off with Robert Plant for a writing vacation at Bron-Yr-Aur in Wales. Whether it was Leadbelly's version that inspired him or Fred Gerlach's, the song he ended up himself creating is remarkable, not an imitation but a total reworking of those of his two predecessors. Although he borrowed certain chord sequences from another traditional song, Bert Jansch's "The Waggoner's Lad" on the folk singer's 1966 album *Jack Orion* (which was at the center of a controversy concerning "Black Mountain Side" on *Led Zeppelin I*, see page 70), and the idea of using a banjo may have come from listening to Jansch playing one on this track.

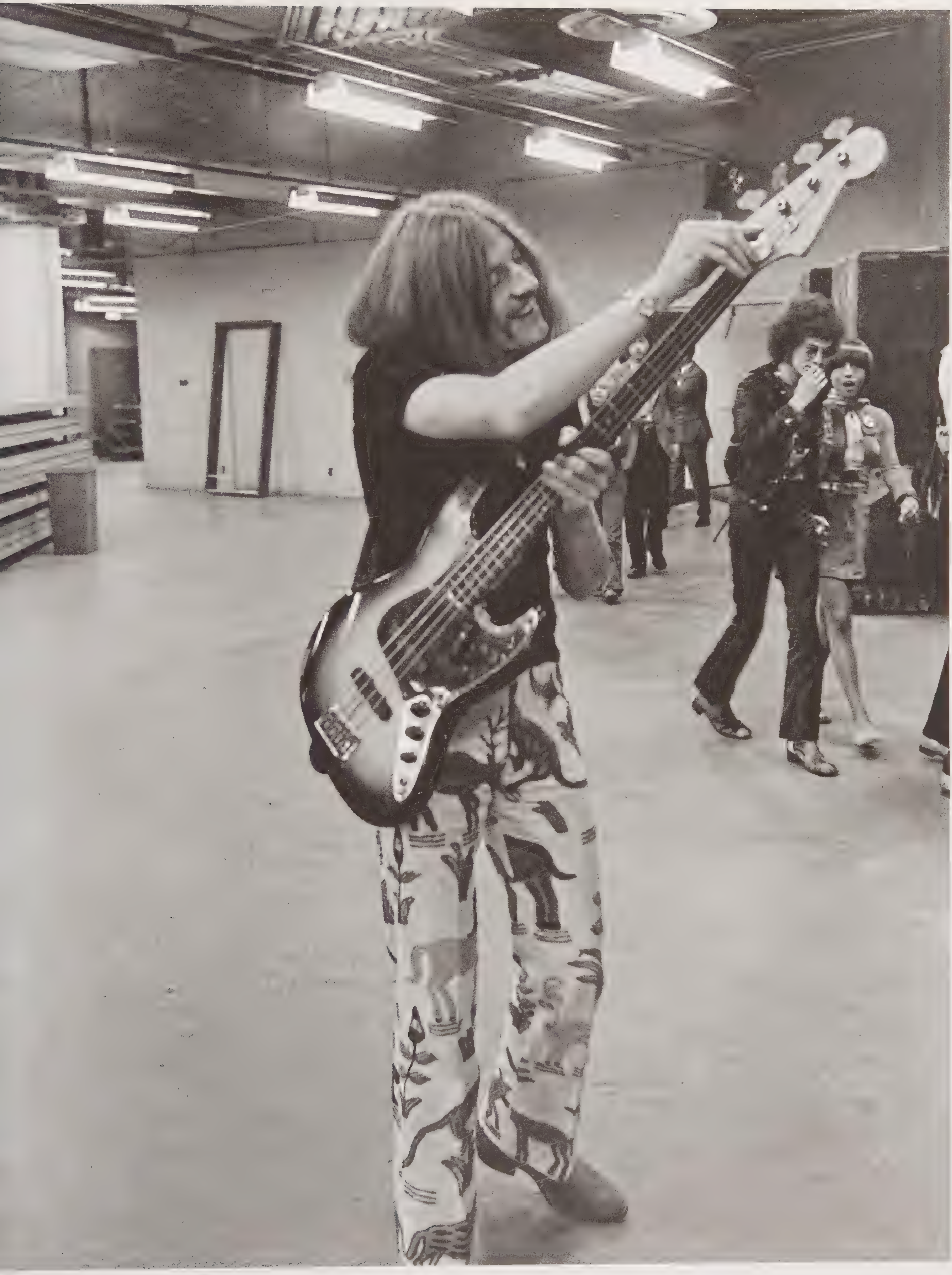
The song opens with acoustic guitar chords that have a curious sonority, as if Jimmy Page has adopted some form of open tuning, although this is not, in fact, the case. Page plays his Harmony Sovereign H1260, colored by strong reverb from the EMT 140 plate reverb. The guitar is positioned toward the left, with the reverb answering on the right. The same is true of Robert Plant's voice, the overall effect lending the opening an unreal quality—strange and a little sinister—in perfect keeping with the lyrics, which are not exactly uplifting.

In the first refrain (from 1:04), Page adds an acoustic twelve-string, probably a Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola, on the right. He is joined by John Paul Jones playing some very harmonious counterpoint on a C. F. Martin A-style mandolin. With "Gallows Pole," Led Zeppelin explores, for the first time in their career, the obverse side of their musical personality, that is to say their folk identity. Although Jimmy Page would claim that acoustic sonorities had already been introduced on many occasions during the course of their preceding albums, it is surely the case that with "Gallows Pole" the band goes far further, diving headlong into the genre of folk, albeit reworked in Led Zep style.

As soon as Jones enters on his Jazz Bass (1:19), the track takes an irresistibly syncopated turn, with the guitars playing a frenetic rhythmic part that alternates between strumming and palm mute, serving to reinforce Page's clear-toned Gibson Les Paul in the left-hand channel. In the second refrain, the bass unexpectedly doubles the mandolin countermelody. All of a sudden, in comes John Bonham on drums (2:04), creating an exhilarating dynamic somewhere between Tamla Motown and country and western. This particular color is further heightened by the entry of a banjo played by Jimmy Page: "I'd never played one before either," explains the guitarist. "It was [...] John Paul Jones's instrument. I just picked it up and started moving my fingers around until the chords sounded right, which is the same way I work on compositions when the guitar's in different tunings."[37] The banjo is a Vega PS-5 Long Neck, an instrument heard here for the one and only time on a Led Zeppelin track.

Robert Plant's lead vocal is simply amazing, the singer managing to retain a traditional feel while gradually increasing the intensity and ending up in an absolutely delirious rock 'n' roll mode. This is particularly remarkable in the outro, a view with which the singer concurs: "The outro of 'Gallows Pole' is great, with all the manic singing I'd overcooked horrendously before that. It started having some meaning. I was learning how to syncopate. I was flourishing."[40]

This outro, it has to be said, is unrivaled from every point of view. In addition to the vocals, the rhythms are incredibly dynamic, with the drummer and bass player giving it everything they've got; a solo from Page with Tone Bender fuzz, making his Les Paul sound almost like a fiddle (from 3:36); and backing vocals (from 3:25, left-hand side) providing a kind of offbeat chant answered by Plant. "Gallows Pole" is a jewel in the Led Zeppelin catalog and proof of their immense talent.



Keith Relf and Jim McCarty onstage in 1964. With "Tangerine," Jimmy Page underlines the connection between the Yardbirds and Led Zeppelin.

TANGERINE

Jimmy Page / 3:12

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six-string and twelve-string), lead guitar, pedal steel guitar
John Paul Jones: bass, mandolin
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Island Studios, London: July 6, 1970 (Studio One)

Mixing

Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Tangerine" is the last song to be written by Jimmy Page without lyrics by Robert Plant and the only Page song on *Led Zeppelin III* for which Plant does not receive a songwriting credit.

Genesis

With "Tangerine," the Led Zeppelin airship heads back to the sixties and the Yardbirds era. During the recording session of April 3, 1968, at Columbia Studios in New York City (the last session before the band split up), Keith Relf, Jimmy Page, Chris Dreja, and Jim McCarty recorded six songs, including one called "Knowing That I'm Losing You." This seems to have been composed by Page, with Keith Relf contributing to the lyrics.

The words have only been partly changed, and the second verse of the Yardbirds version is almost identical to the first version of "Tangerine." "I'd written it after an old emotional upheaval and I just changed a few of the lyrics for the new version,"[55] explains Jimmy Page. However, Jane Relf, the sister of the Yardbirds singer (who died in 1976), would later bitterly complain that her brother had never been credited on the Led Zeppelin record. To make amends, or at least to calm things down, in November 2017 Page produced *Yardbirds '68*, a compilation of rarities by the group comprising ten numbers recorded live at Anderson Theatre, New York City, in March 1968 and ten more from the studio, including the very same "Knowing That I'm Losing You" from which "Tangerine" derives. "We thought this might be lost forever, but we've rediscovered it, re-mixed it. It's of great historical importance. We're delighted to see the release,"[56] declare Jim McCarty, Chris Dreja, and Jimmy Page in a joint statement.

This provided a solution to the unfounded accusation against Page. In his defense, the guitarist declared that he had never wanted the Yardbirds to split up; it was Keith Relf and Jim McCarty who had bailed out, leaving him alone with what remained of the group…

In the lyrics of "Tangerine," the protagonist-narrator recalls times gone by, memories that *turn to gray* before again assuming a warm tangerine color in his memory: *I was her love, she was my queen/And now a thousand years between.* In the final verse he wonders: *Does she*

Yardbirds '68—Live at Anderson Theater, produced and promoted by Jimmy Page in November 2017, had been intended as an official LP by the Yardbirds themselves in 1968, but because of the poor sound quality the project was shelved. In 1971 the recording was released by Epic under the title *Live Yardbirds (Featuring Jimmy Page)* in order to capitalize on the success of Led Zeppelin. Page twice succeeded in having the recording withdrawn from sale: in 1971 and in 1976, when Columbia Special Products again tried to release it. Since that time, the master tapes have been in the guitarist's possession.

still remember times like these?/To think of us again? Although he asks himself this question, there seems little doubt that he knows the answer…The words are simple and the images effective. Like a painter, Page plays with colors as a way of expressing his emotions: yesterday orange, or tangerine, when their love was at its height; today gray, because the beautiful experience recalled by the narrator is now firmly in the past.

Might this young woman—who knocked Jimmy Page off his feet and lit up his life for a time—be the singer-songwriter Jackie DeShannon? It's not impossible. In the mid-sixties, in addition to forming a solid songwriting partnership, the pair are known to have had a romantic liaison. What is beyond doubt is the Californian folk-rock atmosphere of the song. Neil Young, eat your heart out!

Led Zeppelin included "Tangerine" in the set list for their Japan tour of September 1971 and also played it on their American tour of summer 1972. There was then a gap before they performed it again, this time at Earls Court in London (May 17–25, 1975). Finally, Robert Plant would play a new version of the song during his 2010–11 Band of Joy tour.

Production

Jimmy Page is fond of opening tracks with snippets of studio atmosphere, dialogue, mistakes, and so on, or incorporating such elements into the body of a song. This is the case with "Immigrant Song" and "Friends," and "Tangerine" follows in their footsteps. This time he leaves in a false start by way of introduction. A guitar is heard being strummed, followed by a count-in: "One, two…one, two, three, four…one, two…" Page regarded this kind of approach as justified at the time, although less so now. What he was actually attempting to do was appreciably slow down the tempo. It is not until thirteen seconds into the track that "Tangerine" starts properly, with a twelve-string guitar, most likely the Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola acoustic used on "Gallows Pole." Page doubles the instrument and positions it in stereo, also adding what is presumably his Harmony Sovereign H1260 in the center of the stereo image in order to fill out the general texture. Robert Plant enters in a gentle voice that is just right for the almost meditative atmosphere of the verses. As on "Gallows Pole," John Paul Jones weaves countermelodies on his C. F. Martin A-style mandolin (from 0:34). In the refrains, Jimmy Page plays his Fender 800 pedal steel guitar. "I hadn't touched a pedal steel from the first album to the third," explains the guitarist. "It's a bit of a pinch really from the things that Chuck Berry did."[18] He seems to be modulating the sound with his JMI Vox Grey wah-wah and strong reverb. The pedal steel adds a Californian folk-rock flavor, all the more so as Robert Plant harmonizes around his vocal line, reinforcing this apparent American influence. The drums and bass join in during the refrains, John Bonham laying down a simple but effective groove, supported by Jones with a no-frills bass line. As on "Friends" on this same album, Jones has swapped his Jazz Bass for his 1953 violin-shaped Gibson EB-1, on which he produces a soft and silky sound.

After the second verse, Jimmy Page delivers a very good, melodically flowing slide solo on his Les Paul (from

Jimmy Page may have written "Tangerine" in memory of Jackie DeShannon, with whom he had an understanding, both romantic and artistic.

1:40), double-tracked and with Tone Bender fuzz. He is supported by the highly efficient rhythm section made up of Bonham and Jones, which literally propels him forward. After a final refrain that Plant ends virtually a cappella, harmonizing with himself, the track draws to a close with an outro that gives prominence to the pedal steel guitar before ending with an acoustic guitar and a final chord played in harmonics.

A comparison of "Knowing That I'm Losing You" by the Yardbirds and "Tangerine" by Led Zeppelin reveals clear similarities in the instrumental arrangement: the use of a twelve-string, a lap steel in the refrains, and a more or less identical guitar solo, even down to the Tone Bender fuzz. But there is nothing surprising about that, because Jimmy Page is the composer of the song after all, and a talented arranger to boot.

JACKIE DESHANNON

Born in Hazel, Kentucky, in 1944 Jackie DeShannon (Sharon Lee Myers, to give her real name) was the voice that lit up many a hit record in the sixties, including "What the World Needs Now Is Love" by Burt Bacharach and Hal David and "Needles and Pins" by Jack Nitzsche and Sonny Bono. But she was also a songwriter. In collaboration with Sharon Sheeley she wrote "Dum Dum" for Brenda Lee and "Breakaway" for Irma Thomas. In 1965 she crossed the Atlantic to a London in full swing and teamed up with a young guitarist by the name of Jimmy Page. This was the start of an artistic collaboration that brought forth "Come and Stay with Me" for Marianne Faithfull… and a love affair between the two songwriting partners.

THAT'S THE WAY

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:38

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars, dulcimer, bass, vocal harmonies (?)
John Paul Jones: mandolin, vocal harmonies (?)
John Bonham: tambourine

Recorded

Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 30, 1970 (Studio Two)

Mixing

Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Chris Kimsey
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

After attending a screening of *Almost Famous* (2000) prior to editing, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant gave its director, Cameron Crowe, permission to use a number of Led Zeppelin songs in the movie. Ultimately, "That's the Way" was the only one to make it onto the soundtrack.

Genesis

"That's the Way" (working title: "The Boy Next Door") would presumably never have seen the light of day had Robert Plant and Jimmy Page, following a long and hectic series of concerts in the United States, not gone off to recharge their batteries far from the madding crowds at the cottage of Bron-Yr-Aur. And this song reflects the atmosphere, bucolic and steeped in legend, of their Welsh retreat. "We had a guitar with us. It was a tiring walk coming down a ravine and we stopped and sat down. I played the tune and Robert sang the first verse straight off. We had a tape recorder with us and we got the tune down," says Page.[24] Robert Plant adds: "It was absolutely wonderful, and my heart was so light and happy. At that time, at that age, 1970 was like the biggest blue sky I ever saw."[47]

For all this, "That's the Way" wallows in neither naive optimism nor some sort of utopian melancholy. On the contrary, Robert Plant has written one of the most beautiful lyrics of the entire Led Zeppelin catalog, and, moreover, one that provokes reflection. *That's the way it ought to be*, he sings. To put it differently, the world he describes, the world as he sees it, is not the world he would wish for. There is pollution (*All the fish that lay in dirty water dying*) and on the other hand there is the alternative hippie culture, one of whose main ideas had been the return to nature (*Yesterday I saw you kissing tiny flowers*). But there is also the reality witnessed by the four members of the group during their recent American tour, the shocking scenes of race riots and protests against the Vietnam War. *You're in the darker side of town* evokes certain states in which segregation reigned with impunity (*I can't play with you no more*), and where long hair (*You gonna let your hair hang down*) and rock 'n' roll (*Could it be you've found another game to play*) are seen as marks of the devil. Finally, at the end of the road, death waits inexorably: *All that lives is born to die*.

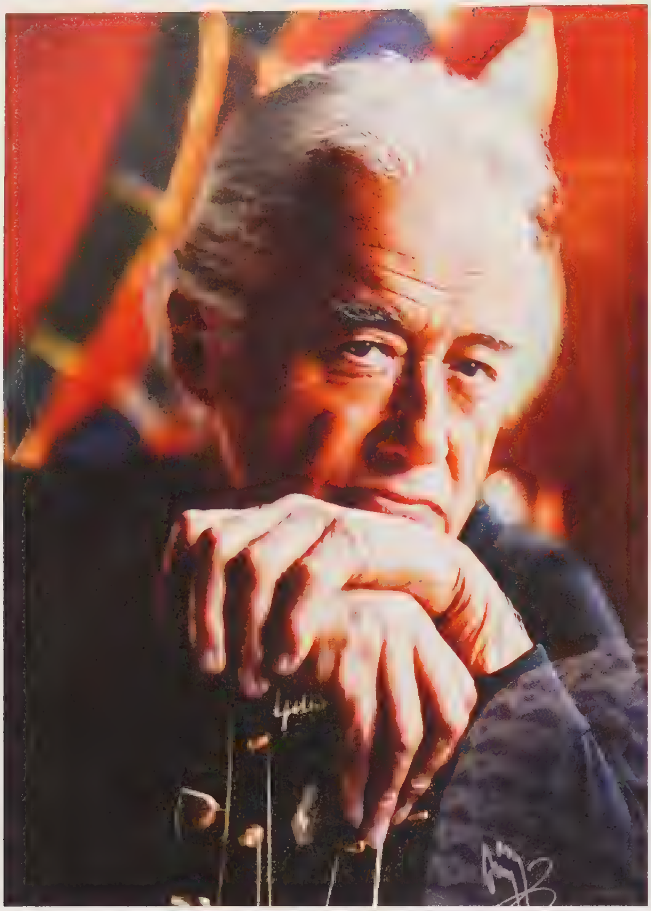
PARK
1¢
STEAKS

The arrest of the Weathermen in Chicago in June 1969. Social violence of this kind would inspire Robert Plant to write his lyrics for "That's the Way."

"That's the Way" is one of Led Zeppelin's great acoustic songs. It was performed onstage at the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music on June 28, 1970, and from then on regularly during the group's 1970 to 1972 tours. In 1971 it was included on an EP for the Australian market (with "Going to California" and "Stairway to Heaven"). Many years later, Page and Plant would perform the song during their MTV *Unledded* show, and John Paul Jones would perform it during his 2001 tour.

Production

The track opens with a superb folk-like intro played by Jimmy Page on his acoustic Harmony Sovereign H1260 (double-tracked). He adopts an open tuning in order, in his own words, to give "the track a lot of



Jimmy Page would continue to perform "That's the Way" long after the breakup of Led Zeppelin.

Scarlet Page in 2014. According to Robert Plant, Jimmy's daughter had been conceived forty-four years earlier, at the same time as "That's the Way."

space."[9] "The open G tuning [D G D G B D] on 'That's the Way' was pretty conventional," he explains further. "Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, and many others have used it."[9] On the album version, however, the key is not G but G-flat (a semitone lower). This is almost certainly explained by a slight reduction in the original speed during mixing. This can be seen from a comparison of the album track with the rough mix on CD2 of the deluxe edition of *Led Zeppelin III*, which is clearly in G and has a slightly faster tempo (confirming that the "official" version has been slowed down). Why would this have been done? Perhaps in order to give the song a greater sense of profundity. Speeding up or slowing down tracks at the mixing stage is an artistic choice made by the producer and is by no means uncommon. For example "When I'm Sixty-Four" by the Beatles (on the album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*) was sped up during mixing to inject more dynamism into it.

Plant's vocal entry is accompanied not only by guitar but also by mandolin (from 0:11, in the left-hand channel). This is John Paul Jones once again playing his C. F. Martin A-style. Jones would later explain that both in the studio and onstage, the musicians would sit in a semicircle to perform the song. His mandolin playing is similar to Page's guitar, and boosts the folk-rock vibe reminiscent of Crosby, Stills & Nash or Neil Young—whom Jimmy Page admired. Page in turn adds color to the track with some very fine pedal steel guitar (Fender 800). This is further enhanced by some generous reverb from the EMT 140 plate reverb in order to give the sound a greater sense of spaciousness. "I couldn't really play a pedal steel like a pedal-steel player, but I could play it like me,"[9] says Jimmy Page. Despite his modesty, the result is highly successful, lending the track a dreamlike quality, particularly in the improvised sections between verses (for example at 2:38).

In "That's the Way," Robert Plant gives one of his tenderest performances. His voice is gentle and melancholy, and he makes skillful use of vibrato (listen at 2:09). Calling upon his entire experience, the singer plays with his emotions and is highly effective in communicating them to the listener. He doubles himself in unison in the refrains, and at the end of the last of these can be heard

The co-writers of "That's the Way" embrace the floral look.

harmonizing a cappella, most likely with some help from his bandmates (at 4:19). The effect is wonderful, and all the more so as reverse reverb is used as a sort of pickup for the various instruments.

The track ends with another, more rhythmic, sequence based on a different motif but still on the acoustic guitar. John Bonham makes his presence felt for the first time in this song at 4:45, when he comes in on tambourine (left-hand channel). And the mandolin gives way to another folk music instrument, as Jimmy Page explains: "And right at the end, where everything opens up, I played a dulcimer."[9] Moreover, careful listening to CD2 of the deluxe edition of the album reveals that Page originally played a dulcimer accompaniment throughout the entire track. This is the one and only time in the Led Zeppelin catalog that the instrument makes an appearance. Finally, a bass guitar can be heard that is played, exceptionally, by Jimmy Page. This is probably the 1953 Gibson EB-1, because Andy Johns remembers Page playing a violin-shaped bass. Page says, "I was doing a bunch of overdubs and got excited. John Paul Jones went home, so I put the bass part on it as well! [laughs] That didn't happen often, believe me!"[9]

During the *Unledded* tour (1994), Robert Plant revealed that Scarlet, Jimmy Page's daughter (born March 24, 1971), had been conceived approximately half an hour after the writing of "That's the Way."

The four members of Led Zeppelin expand their musical horizons with "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp," a song heavily influenced by the old-time music of the Appalachians.

BRON-Y-AUR STOMP

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones / 4:20

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, castanets, spoons
Unidentified Musicians: maracas, hand claps

Recorded

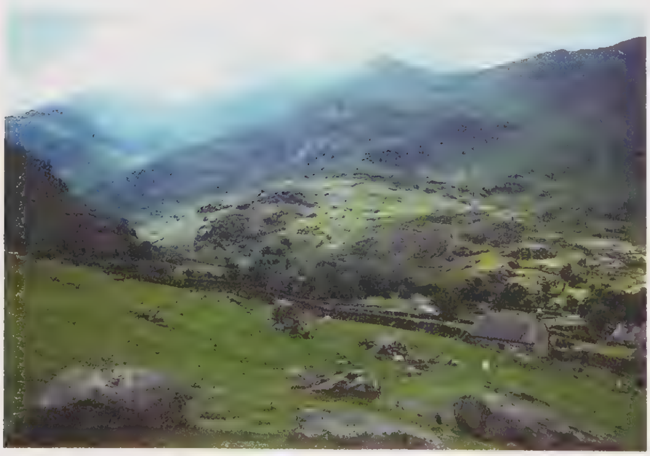
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: December 13, 1969 (Studio Two)
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Island Studios, London: July 6, 1970 (Studio One)

Mixing

Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Dave (?) (Olympic)
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page



The green and rugged landscape of Snowdonia National Park in Wales, cradle of the third album.

Genesis

At Olympic Studios in Barnes on December 13, 1969, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham recorded an instrumental named "Jennings Farm Blues" after the Welsh farm bought by Robert Plant and his wife Maureen. Jimmy Page had written the piece a few weeks before, during the autumn American tour. It had been given the working title "Bar III" and, as can be heard on the *Led Zeppelin III* bonus disc (2014), was based on the lively interplay between guitar parts. Ahmet Ertegun of Atlantic Records and manager Peter Grant were both keen to finally release a single by the band in the United Kingdom in early 1970 in order to coincide with the UK tour of January 7–February 17. So why not "Jennings Farm Blues"?

Once the idea of a single had been definitively shelved (although "Immigrant Song" was subsequently given more serious consideration), "Jennings Farm Blues" was reborn during the Welsh "exile" of Robert Plant and Jimmy Page as an acoustic song. It was renamed "Bron-Y-Aur" (complete with spelling mistake, the proper spelling of the Snowdonia cottage they stayed in being Bron-Yr-Aur). Robert Plant wrote the words, which initially seem to be addressed to a human lover: *Ahhhh caught you smiling at me…I sung love songs so glad, always smiling, never sad.* Gradually the realization dawns that the lyrics express the sense of plenitude and tranquility derived by Plant from going on long walks in the countryside with his dog, a blue-eyed border collie named Strider. *Ain't no companion like a blue-eyed merle…You're the finest dog I knew, so fine…*The lyrics are eloquent, conveying a true sense of this *pure* friendship between the Led Zeppelin singer and the animal, a companionship that really comes into its own as they *walk down the country lanes* and one that will remain undiminished over the coming years.

Musically, "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp" is a reworking of the traditional music of the Appalachians: old-time music

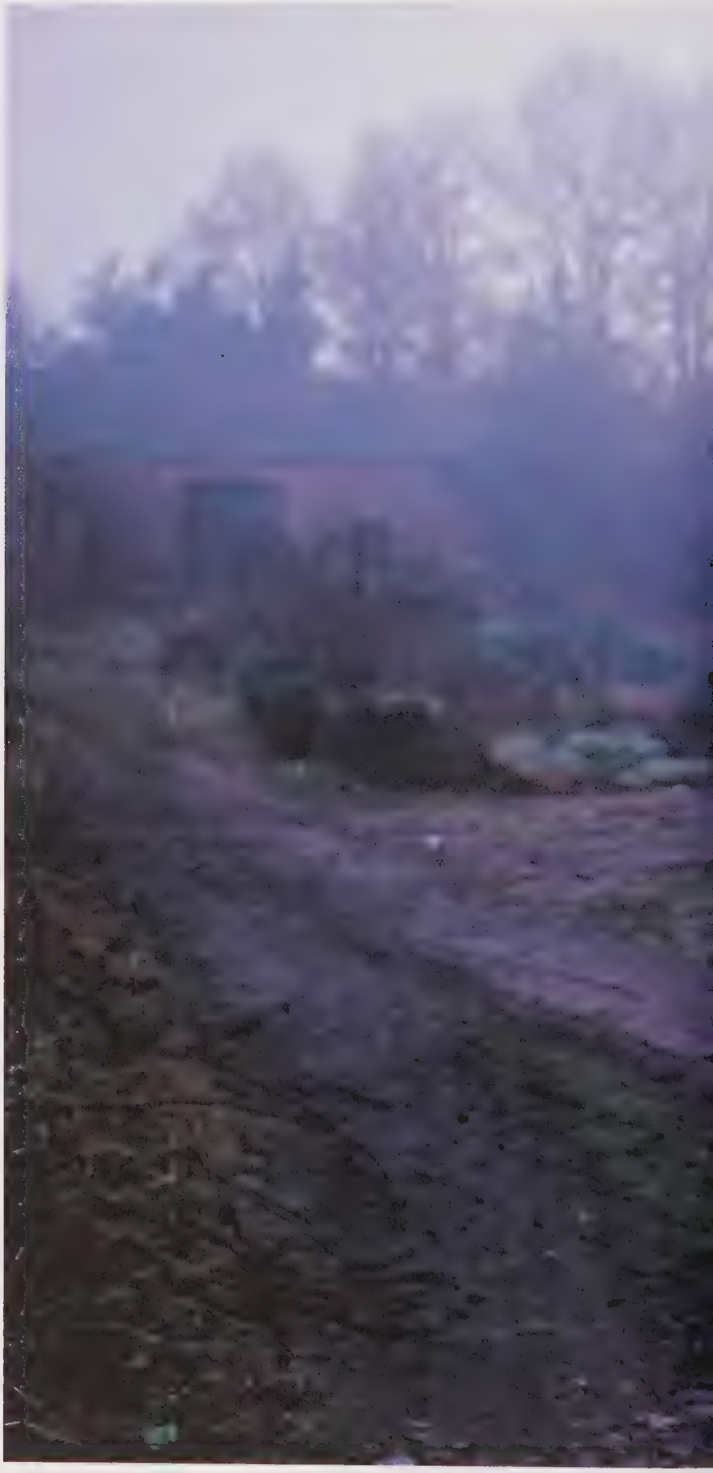
and hoedowns—the quick-time dances that were more often than not led by a violin in the rural United States. Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones (on double bass), and John Bonham (providing backing vocals) performed the song on their first Japanese tour, September 23–29, 1971, and then on a regular basis starting with the seventh UK tour in November–December of that year. In 1977, during their eleventh American tour, the four members of Led Zeppelin coupled "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp" with "Black Country Woman."

Production

The only thing "Jennings Farm Blues" (recorded by Led Zeppelin in December 1969 at Olympic Studios) has in common with the album version is its harmonic structure. This initial take on the idea was pure rock, with distorted guitars, a heavy rhythm section, and no lead vocal, Robert Plant having to make do with a tambourine. The execution is pretty rough-edged, suggesting that the group was searching for the right formula. They found it four months later, thanks to Plant, when they completely reworked the piece. "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp was my influence, really," explains the singer. "I love folksy things, especially with a beat like that."[21] The rhythm in question is the stomp, which was to feature in the title of the song. A stomp is a dance in the jazz or folk tradition, marked by exaggerated stamping of the feet.

By the time the group came to finalize the track at Island Studios on July 6, the rock vibe of the original had been completely abandoned and replaced by an acoustic blues-folk feel. Jimmy Page opens the song on his Harmony Sovereign H1260, probably tuned in a variant of open F (C F C F A F). Page plays the intro using his combination of fingerpicking and flatpicking. It is directly inspired by Bert Jansch's "The Waggoner's Lad" (on the 1966 album *Jack Orion*), from which Page had already borrowed certain chord sequences for "Gallows Pole." Here he does the same again, this time adapting the entire intro, played by Jansch on the banjo, to the new number. Nevertheless, his rereading of the original results in the composition of totally different verses, instrumental breaks, and refrains. What we have once again here is the transmission of material from performer to performer, which is inherent in folk music.

Jimmy Page's guitar playing is nonetheless excellent and provides a good demonstration of his eclecticism. After thirty seconds of solo Harmony, John Bonham joins in with some minimal drum work—bass drum and hi-hat alone—on his Ludwig. This, of course, is the stomp of the title, and gives the listener an irresistible desire to stamp his or her foot! Robert Plant makes his presence known soon after, his voice somewhat recessed in the mix. His performance hits the mark, and he can be felt taking pleasure in his singing. It is interesting to



Robert Plant's border collie is the sole object of the singer's affection in "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp."

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Robert Plant named his dog after the character Aragorn in *The Lord of the Rings*, also known as Strider.

"Bron-Y-Aur Stomp" draws from Appalachian music, especially the folk dance known as a hoedown. This dance has also influenced Aaron Copland (the ballet *Rodeo*, 1942) and Emerson, Lake & Palmer ("Trilogy," 1972).

note that the singer harmonizes with himself at the beginning of the first two verses, and thereafter throughout each entire verse.

John Paul Jones comes in on bass (0:47) just as Robert Plant launches into his lead vocal. He is playing an acoustic bass of sadly unspecified make with the frets removed. The sound resembles that of a double bass and underlines the vocal line perfectly. In the first refrain, Plant adopts more of a blues style and a harder-edged timbre. Hand claps can be heard (from 1:16), no doubt performed by various members of the group, and the rhythm is then reinforced (from 1:30) by a pair of maracas, presumably overdubbed by Bonzo. All of this helps to make "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp" an object lesson in groove, of which the four members of Led Zeppelin are masters. The track continues in a similar

vein, with some exhilarating vocal harmonization from Robert Plant (listen from 2:27 to 2:51). Jimmy Page, alone on guitar, then reprises the intro before a pickup by all three instrumentalists brings in another verse. At the end of the track, a new percussion instrument makes an appearance, played by John Bonham: castanets (from 3:28), but also, according to Page, spoons, creating an unusual fusion of flamenco and jug band. After another refrain, the song closes with a final chord.

"Bron-Y-Aur Stomp" is one of the most successful tracks on what is an incredible album, demonstrating that Led Zeppelin's revisiting of folk is no pale imitation of Crosby, Stills & Nash, as has often been claimed, but an authentic musical expression from four highly talented musicians.

HATS OFF TO (ROY) HARPER

Traditional, arranged by Charles Obscure / 3:41

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: June 10, 1970 (Studio One)
Mixing
Ardent Studios, Memphis, Tennessee: August 1970
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Terry Manning, Jimmy Page

The bluesman Mississippi Fred McDowell was one of Jimmy Page's points of reference in "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper."

Genesis

The closing track on *Led Zeppelin III* is clearly meant as a tribute to Roy Harper. The four members of the group had listened to, and enjoyed, the albums of the Manchester-born songwriter—*Sophisticated Beggar* (1966), but also *Come Out Fighting Ghengis Smith* (1967) and *Folkjokeopus* (1968), produced by Shel Talmy—which had placed him at the forefront of the progressive folk scene alongside the Incredible String Band and Fairport Convention. However, it was not until the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music in June 1970 that a friendship developed between the band and Harper. "'Hats Off to (Roy) Harper' is just an acknowledgement of a friendship,"[21] Robert Plant has said.

A few months later, the meeting of minds between Harper and the band resulted in this particularly pleasing immersion in the world of country blues. "On *III*, we knew we wanted to allude to the country blues but, in the tradition of the style, we felt it had to be spontaneous and immediate,"[9] explains Jimmy Page to Brad Tolinski.

If Jimmy Page plays "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" in the spirit of the founding fathers of the Delta blues (and in particular Mississippi Fred McDowell), Robert Plant, for his part, borrows prolifically once more—first and foremost from Bukka White. For example, the first two lines of the song, *When I done quit hollerin' baby/I believe I shake 'em on down* are inspired by the refrain of the hugely famous "Shake 'Em on Down," a blues of unbridled eroticism (in which we learn that the women of Georgia have the prettiest behinds!). White recorded this number in Chicago in September 1937, shortly before serving a sentence at Parchman Farm, a.k.a. the Mississippi State Penitentiary. A little further on, Plant borrows the line *Put on your mornin' gown* from "Help Me" by Sonny Boy Williamson II (Rice Miller). He also paraphrases the

Bukka White, a specialist in blues played on the slide guitar, and writer of "Shake 'Em On Down," from which Robert Plant would borrow a few lines some thirty years later.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" arrangement is credited to Charles Obscure, a Jimmy Page alias. And a few months after the release of *Led Zeppelin III*, the guitarist took part in the recording of Roy Harper's fifth album, *Stormcock* (1971), under the pseudonym S. Flavius Mercurius.

Texan bluesman Oscar Woods and his "Lone Wolf Blues," recorded in New Orleans in 1936. It is interesting to compare *Now I sent my baby a brand new twenty-dollar bill/If that don't bring her, I know my shotgun will* (Woods) with *Gave my baby a twenty-dollar bill/If that don't get her, sure my shot, shot, shotgun will* (Plant). As for the line *Get me baby, won't be late/You know by that I mean seconds late*, this takes up the theme of "Down in the Bottom," a blues by Willie Dixon recorded by Howlin' Wolf.

Curiously, Led Zeppelin has never performed "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" live!

Production

Jimmy Page explains how "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" was made: "I had this old Vox amp, and one day Robert plugged his mike into the amp's tremolo channel, and I started playing and he started singing. And what you hear on the album is essentially an edit of our first two takes."[9] This was the first of the group's songs to be performed by just two of its members, Page on his Harmony Sovereign H1260, tuned most likely in open C (C G C G C E), and Robert Plant on lead vocal with his mic plugged into what may well have been the Vox AC30 amp with integrated tremolo that Page had previously used with the Yardbirds.

The song opens with the guitar caught in a distorting echo loop, "that freaky echo,"[43] as Page describes it, generated in all likelihood by the Vox CO2 Deluxe Echo. The Harmony Sovereign and Plant's voice are then faded in together. Page plays mostly bottleneck, very much in the spirit of Mississippi Fred McDowell. He accompanies Plant throughout, playing some short solo passages between the verses and providing support of a more rhythmic kind toward the end of the song. Plant's vocal sound, meanwhile, colored by both reverb and tremolo, and with the edge taken off the higher frequencies, is thoroughly roots.

"Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" may not be the best track on *Led Zeppelin III*, but it reflects the eclecticism of the group and the uncompromising nature of their artistic choices. Jimmy Page would explain the real meaning of the song: "In a way I mean hats off to anybody who sticks by what they think is right and has the courage not to sell out. We did a whole set of country blues and traditional blues numbers that Robert suggested. But that was the only one we put on the record."[37] As for Roy Harper, when the singer heard the song, "He didn't know what to say,"[21] reports Robert Plant.

In 1975, when Pink Floyd were at Abbey Road trying to record the vocals for "Have a Cigar" for their album *Wish You Were Here*, they discovered neither Roger Waters nor David Gilmour capable of singing the song. Fortunately, next door in Studio Two, Roy Harper was working on *HQ* and it was he who sings on the Floyd track. "It was played around the world," he would later comment. "That was my vocals on a number one selling single. Everybody thought it was Roger [Waters]."[59]

ROY HARPER, THE FOLK-ROCK BARD OF THE COUNTERCULTURE

At the end of the sixties, Roy Harper was one of the most unique voices of the British counterculture and underground scene. In 1968, Robert Plant went to see the folk singer in concert at Mothers in Birmingham, resulting in a first encounter that Roy Harper remembers well: "I was twenty-six and he was nineteen. He was accompanied—or being followed, I don't know which—by four women. He automatically struck a light in my estimation. My clearest memory is seeing him waft away into the middle distance, surrounded by this coterie of chickpeas, and thinking, 'That guy's got something very attractive going on.'"[2]

Two years later, at the end of June 1970, Led Zeppelin and Roy Harper were on the bill together at the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music, alongside the cream of the Californian rock scene (from the Byrds to Jefferson Airplane via Country Joe McDonald and Frank Zappa & the Mothers of Invention), as well as Pink Floyd and Fairport Convention. It is from the time of this festival that the firm friendship between the pioneering hard-rock group and the folk singer dates. "At Bath, this [other] guy came up to me and asked if I could play my instrumental 'Blackpool,' so I did. We shook hands and he said he was Jimmy Page. Later on there's this band onstage and I recognise it's Jimmy. I was blown away when I [also] realized who he was."[58]

Folk Song at Les Cousins

By the time he was admitted to the Led Zeppelin inner circle, Roy Harper already had several albums to his name. These may not exactly have been hits, but they went down well on the underground scene. Harper was born in 1941 in Rusholme, a suburb of Manchester. His mother died three weeks after giving birth to him and so he was raised by his father (and stepmother) in Lytham St. Annes, Lancashire. In the early fifties he formed a skiffle group with his brothers David and Harry. In 1956 he left school and joined the Royal Air Force, which proved disastrous. Incapable of submitting to the strict discipline, he feigned insanity and was given electroshock treatment in Princess Mary's RAF Hospital.

After returning to civilian life, Roy Harper started to perform in clubs in the United Kingdom—increasingly influenced not only by Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly but also by the poets Shelley and Keats and the writers of the Beat Generation—and then in continental Europe and North Africa as well. After returning to England in 1965, he took up a residency at the famous folk club Les Cousins in Soho, London, and before long was offered a recording contract by the label Strike. *Sophisticated Beggar*, a collection of Harper's poems set to music and produced by the songwriter Pierre Tubbs, was released in 1966. This was followed by *Come Out Fighting Ghengis Smith* (1967), and *Folkjokeopus* (1968), both produced by Shel Talmy. Two extended works of a progressive folk vibe, both of which met with real interest in the hipper circles of post–Swinging London, can be found on these Talmy-produced albums: "Circle" (eleven minutes long) on *Come Out Fighting* and "McGoohan's Blues" (almost eighteen minutes long) on *Folkjokeopus*.

Peter Jenner, Harvest, and Abbey Road

A new stage in Roy Harper's career began in 1970 when Peter Jenner (the former manager of Pink Floyd) signed him to Harvest Records, EMI's progressive label. Over the next ten years, Harper was to record a number of albums at the prestigious Abbey Road Studios in

Roy Harper, a songwriter who inspired Led Zeppelin and would later sing with Pink Floyd.
Following spread: Roy Harper and Robert Plant sharing a relaxed moment on a flight to Pittsburgh on July 24, 1973.

London. These include *Flat Baroque and Berserk* (1970), which was lifted by "Another Day" (subsequently covered by Kate Bush and Peter Gabriel) to an unhoped-for twentieth place on the UK charts; *Stormcock* (1971), with "Me and My Woman" (orchestrated by David Bedford); *Lifemask* (1973), whose entire second side is taken up by "The Lord's Prayer"; *Valentine* (1974), with "Male Chauvinist Pig Blues" (featuring Jimmy Page on guitar and Keith Moon on drums); *HQ* (1975), with "When an Old Cricketer Leaves the Crease"; and *The Unknown Soldier* (1980), with contributions from David Gilmour and Kate Bush. Also worth mentioning, for the presence of Paul and Linda McCartney on "One of Those Days in England," is *Bullinamingvase* (1977), recorded at Harper's farm in the village of Marden, Herefordshire.

With a Little Help from Jimmy Page and David Gilmour

Having achieved the status of mainspring of the folk-rock scene thanks to his succession of Abbey Road albums and his close links with the members of Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd, at the beginning of the eighties Roy Harper founded his own record company. For Public Records he recorded *Work of Heart* (1982), which was hailed by Derek Jewell in the columns of the *Sunday Times* as quite simply the "album of the year." This did not stop it being a commercial flop, to such an extent that the singer-songwriter was forced to declare bankruptcy and sell his farm in Herefordshire. His salvation came a short while later in the figure of Jimmy Page, whom he performed alongside at various festivals as the MacGregors and as Themselves and with whose help he recorded *Whatever Happened to Jugula?* (1985). David Gilmour also contributed to his revival, inviting him onstage for his three shows at the Hammersmith Odeon in April 1984. This process of rehabilitation would continue with the creation of his Science Friction label in 1990 and the recording of *Death or Glory?* in 1992.

Since then, Roy Harper has released some fifteen discs (both studio and live), notably *The Dream Society* (1998), *The Green Man* (2000), and *Man & Myth* (2013), the last of these recorded with Pete Townshend. This nonconformist has produced a prolific body of work that has never pandered to the demands of the record industry, and in this represents the achievement of a free man.

KEY TO THE HIGHWAY / TROUBLE IN MIND

Big Bill Broonzy, Charlie Segar, Richard M. Jones / 4:05

Musicians: Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica / **Jimmy Page:** acoustic guitar / **Recorded: Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London:** June 10, 1970 (Studio One) / **Technical Team: Producer:** Jimmy Page / **Executive Producer:** Peter Grant / **Sound Engineer:** Andy Johns, Drew Griffiths (for the reissue)

Genesis

Low-down blues was very much the order of the day at Olympic Studios on June 10, 1970. In addition to "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper," which harks back to the Delta blues of Mississippi Fred McDowell, Led Zeppelin also put its stamp on two other classics of the genre, "Key to the Highway" and "Trouble in Mind." "Key to the Highway" has spawned numerous versions since it was first recorded by the blues pianist Charlie Segar in 1940. Among the best known are those by Jazz Gillum (1940), Big Bill Broonzy (1941), and Little Walter (at Chess Studios in 1958 in the company of Muddy Waters, Luther Tucker, Otis Spann, Willie Dixon, and George Hunter [or Francis Clay]). It is also worth mentioning the impassioned blues-rock adaptations by Eric Clapton with his group Derek and the Dominos on *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* (1970), with Johnnie Johnson on *Johnnie B. Bad* (1991), and with B. B. King on *Riding with the King* (2000). The song tells of a man taking leave of his loved one before making for the border along the open road. He is presumably on the run after a brush with the authorities or the husband of his lover.

The second standard revisited by the four members of Led Zeppelin is called "Trouble in Mind." This is a blues ballad composed by the pianist Richard M. Jones and recorded in 1924 by Thelma La Vizzo and two years later by Bertha "Chippie" Hill with a certain Louis Armstrong on cornet. Since then, dozens of performers have incorporated this superb number into their repertoire, from Georgia White to Lightnin' Hopkins, from Johnny Cash to the Rolling Stones, from Janis Joplin to Hank Williams Jr. Here, too, the song lyrics can be said to sum up the entire story of the blues: *I'm going down to the river/I'm gonna buy me a rockin' chair/And if the blues don't leave me/I'm gonna to rock away from there.*

"Key to the Highway/Trouble in Mind" can be found on CD2 of the deluxe edition of *Led Zeppelin III*, released in 2014.

Production

These two songs (the first runs into the second) were forged in the same mold as "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper." They share the same recording date, the same studio, the same instrumentation, and the same spirit, and are two of the many country blues and traditional songs that Robert Plant suggested to Jimmy Page. The guitarist plays his six-string Harmony Sovereign H1260 throughout, apparently in open-C tuning (C G C G C E). Robert Plant again sings with his mic plugged into a Vox amp (the Vox AC30?), with very pronounced tremolo. He delivers his vocal line (with the higher frequencies

Big Bill Broonzy, one of the first to record "Key to the Highway."

subdued) equally as effectively as before and, just like Jimmy Page, demonstrates his perfect mastery of both the feel and the techniques of the blues. In the way the words Plant sings depart significantly from the original versions, it is as if he has completely absorbed the text of the two songs. This yields a somewhat curious adaptation of the lyrics that he nevertheless imbues with an authentic feel through his incredible performance—all the more so as he also (by contrast with "Hats Off to [Roy] Harper") plays harmonica, which is likewise colored by strong tremolo from the amp. He even ventures to take what turns out to be a highly effective harmonica solo at 1:36. Meanwhile, Jimmy Page delivers an excellent accompaniment on his acoustic, demonstrating a thorough command and understanding of blues guitar…despite getting tangled up between 3:31 and 3:34!

Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones: Two talented musicians working on an instrumental track.

ST. TRISTAN'S SWORD

Jimmy Page / 5:40

Musicians: Jimmy Page: electric guitar / **John Paul Jones:** bass / **John Bonham:** drums / **Recorded: Island Studios, London:** July 5, 1970 (Studio Two) / **Technical Team: Producer:** Jimmy Page / **Executive Producer:** Peter Grant / **Sound Engineer:** Andy Johns / **Assistant Sound Engineer:** Bob Potter

Genesis

Interviewed by *Mojo* magazine in April 2015, Jimmy Page said: "'St. Tristan's Sword' is the sort of thing that we'd do when we were playing live, not that that track came out from a live thing. But we'd be doing stuff like that, veering off into something and then come back (into the main part of the song). I'd had the riff and the changes to that and I thought, 'Let's just try it.'"[57]

In the song's title, Jimmy Page refers explicitly to one of the great Celtic myths. Tristan, an orphan, is raised by Rohalt and then entrusted to his uncle, Mark, king of Cornwall. Mark sends his nephew on a perilous mission: to travel to Ireland in order to bring back the fair Iseult for his uncle to marry. During the return journey the valiant knight and the young girl drink a love potion …In his version of this thousand-year-old legend that greatly inspired Jimmy Page, Joseph Bédier writes: "In their arbor of verdant boughs, strewn with fresh grasses, Iseult lay herself down, and Tristan by her side, placing between their bodies his naked sword."

Production

"St. Tristan's Sword" is an instrumental that provides a brilliant demonstration of the incredible power trio of Page, Bonham, and Jones. The track opens with a few bars played by the drummer and bassist alone, the two of

Jimmy Page, composer of the promising but unfinished "St. Tristan's Sword."

them laying down a fantastic, locomotive-like groove. Bonzo is perfectly at ease with this funky and relatively technically difficult style of drumming. John Paul Jones supports him with a syncopated, similarly funky bass line that he performs with enormous feeling on his Jazz Bass. Jimmy Page joins them at 0:19, his Gibson Les Paul alternating between palm mute and chords. He plays a rock riff with Tone Bender fuzz and broadened out by means of relatively short delay and reverb. He clearly carries the harmony by himself alone, and at 1:17 raises the key by a tone in order to inject some additional dynamism into the track. He then launches into a solo that is entirely characteristic of his playing, with certain phrases resembling excerpts of previous—or even future—solos from the group's discography. A second riff makes its appearance at 2:16 before the track eventually returns to the initial material and then goes into a second solo on which it fades out.

Although there is a certain vague resemblance between this track and "Over the Hills and Far Away" (*Houses of the Holy*, 1973), "St. Tristan's Sword" is essentially an instrumental somewhere between musical diversion and the promise of an interesting song in the making.

SINGLE 1970

IMMIGRANT SONG* / HEY, HEY, WHAT CAN I DO

HEY, HEY, WHAT CAN I DO
IMMIGRANT SONG /

SINGLE IMMIGRANT SONG / HEY, HEY, WHAT CAN I DO

RELEASE DATE

- United States: November 5, 1970
- Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: 45-2777

John Paul Jones and Robert Plant onstage at the Honolulu Civic Auditorium, although the band would never perform this particular song live.

COVER

The South Carolina band Hootie and the Blowfish recorded "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" for the album *Encomium: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin* (1995).

SIDE B

HEY, HEY, WHAT CAN I DO

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:52

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six-string and twelve-string), backing vocals (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, mandolin, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, backing vocals (?)
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: May–June 1970 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 29, 1970 (Studio Two)
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Chris Kimsey

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

Jimmy Page makes a mistake right at the beginning of the track! Just where Robert Plant comes in (0:16 precisely), he misses the beat with his guitar chord.

Genesis

Despite having been recorded during the sessions for *Led Zeppelin III* (and indeed on the same day as "Immigrant Song") "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do," written by Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, bears no musical resemblance to any of the ten tracks on the album. It is a pop-rock-type song whose sole purpose was apparently to provide a B-side for a single, a format that had never got the four members of Led Zeppelin particularly excited.

The lyrics are not without a certain wry humor, particularly as more comes to light about the nature of the relationship at the heart of the song. The narrator tells us about the young woman with whom he has fallen madly in love: *I thrill with her every touch/I need to tell her she's the only one I really love*, sings Robert Plant. The young lady in question is clearly extremely attractive, but she also has a strong personality, wanting to *ball all day* and staying *drunk all the time*, which doesn't stop her going to church on Sunday.

So who is she? In the second verse the protagonist-narrator describes her as a *street corner girl*, in other words, a hooker. And in the following verse he describes her as someone who hangs around *in the bars where the men play guitars*, that is to say a groupie. The final twist is tragicomic: *I guess there's just one thing that's left for me to do/Gonna pack my bags and move on my way/*

Because I got a worried mind sharing what I thought was mine.

As noted, "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" was chosen as the B-side of "Immigrant Song," released on November 5, 1970 (but not in the United Kingdom), one month after *Led Zeppelin III*. The single reached a perfectly honorable sixteenth place on the Billboard chart on December 12, 1970. "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" is the only non-album song released by Led Zeppelin while they were still together. It was subsequently selected for the compilation *The New Age of Atlantic* (1972) and, after the breakup, was included in the first Led Zeppelin boxed set (1990) and, of course, *The Complete Studio Recordings* (1993). More recently it has found its way onto one of the two companion discs in the *Coda* reissue (2015). Led Zeppelin never performed "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" live. On the other hand, Page and Plant included it in their *No Quarter: Jimmy Page and Robert Plant Unledded* show (1994), and Jimmy Page later played it with the Black Crowes (2000).

Led Zeppelin at Madison Square Garden in New York on September 19, 1970, a month and a half before the release of their single "Immigrant Song" / "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do."

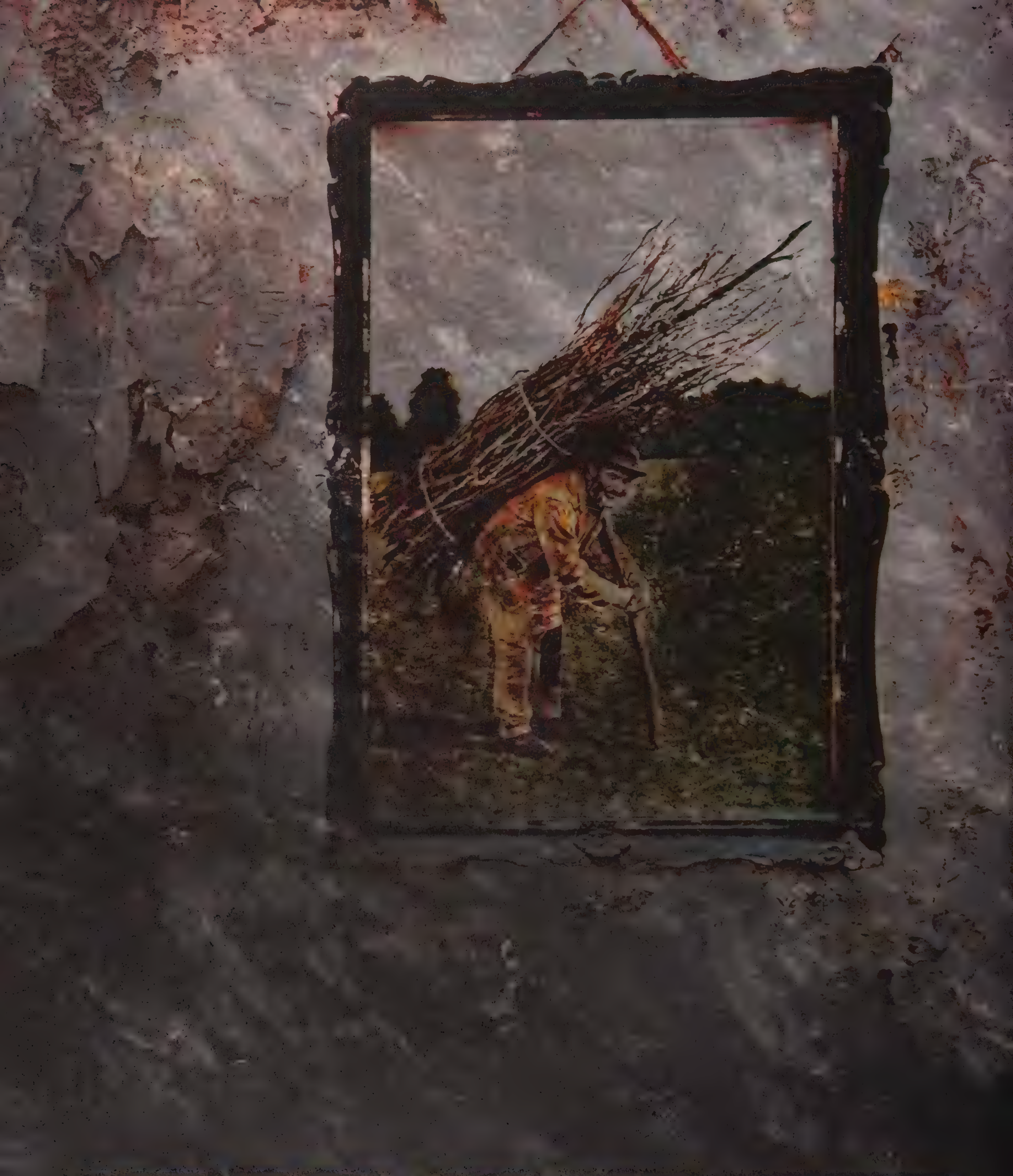
Production

Jimmy Page opens the song with an acoustic riff played on his acoustic Harmony Sovereign H1260, double-tracked in order to give it a thicker consistency. The guitarist is soon joined by John Bonham on drums and John Paul Jones on bass, Jones also playing a mandolin part on his C. F. Martin A-style (left-hand channel), a perfect fit with the country-rock vibe of this track. The quality of Jones's accompaniment also says much about his skills as an arranger, which were, and would continue to be, of great value to the group. After an initial break, Robert Plant launches into his lead vocal in a voice that is low, or even very low, for his tessitura, and yet highly effective. He shifts gears only for the last line of the refrains, in which he gives a show of his characteristic high pitch and power. The switch back to his low timbre would be nowhere near as effective without such an incredible pair of lungs! His performance is excellent throughout, but especially in the final part of the song. Jimmy Page provides the singer with considerable support on his Harmony Sovereign, which is in turn reinforced by a hook played on a twelve-string acoustic, presumably the Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola (listen at 0:27). This strummed twelve-string can also be heard in the refrains, where it is double-tracked and positioned in stereo. Bonzo works his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" discreetly but no less effectively for that, pouring his fantastic sense of rhythm into an irresistible groove that is shadowed by John Paul Jones's superb bass. There's little variation in the arrangement as such, with verse following on from refrain, until the outro, which begins around 2:30. The really interesting part of "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" is where Robert Plant starts to improvise in a gospel style, and backing vocalists, presumably the other three members of Led Zeppelin, answer him in a style highly reminiscent of English pop. At this point Page and Jones abandon themselves to some frantic strumming of the six-string and the mandolin, respectively (from 3:00). Finally, Plant emits one of his signature screams, an *ahhhhh* that he allows to die away over more than twelve seconds (between 2:54 and 3:06). The track ends with a fade-out that differs from version to version: On the single, listeners can hear the various tracks peter out before coming to a sudden end. The first copies of the CD have a rapid fade-out that conceals the ending of the single version, while the fade-out on CD2 of the deluxe edition is a compromise between the other two.

"Hey, Hey, What Can I Do" is the only track from the *Led Zeppelin III* sessions to have undergone final mixing in the United Kingdom (Olympic Studios). The resulting sound is, indeed, typically British, and the contrast with "Immigrant Song," the A-side of this single, could not be greater. What we have here are two different faces of Led Zeppelin.

John Paul Jones, Robert Plant, John Bonham, and Jimmy Page face the crowd at the Inglewood Forum, California, on September 4, 1970.

Ludwig



1. BLACK DOG 2. ROCK AND ROLL 3. THE BATTLE OF EVERMORE 4. STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
5. MISTY MOUNTAIN HOP 6. FOUR STICKS 7. GOING TO CALIFORNIA 8. WHEN THE LEVEE
BREAKS OUTTAKES : NO QUARTER / BOOGIE WITH STU / NIGHT FLY / DOWN BY THE SEASIDE

ALBUM LED ZEPPELIN IV

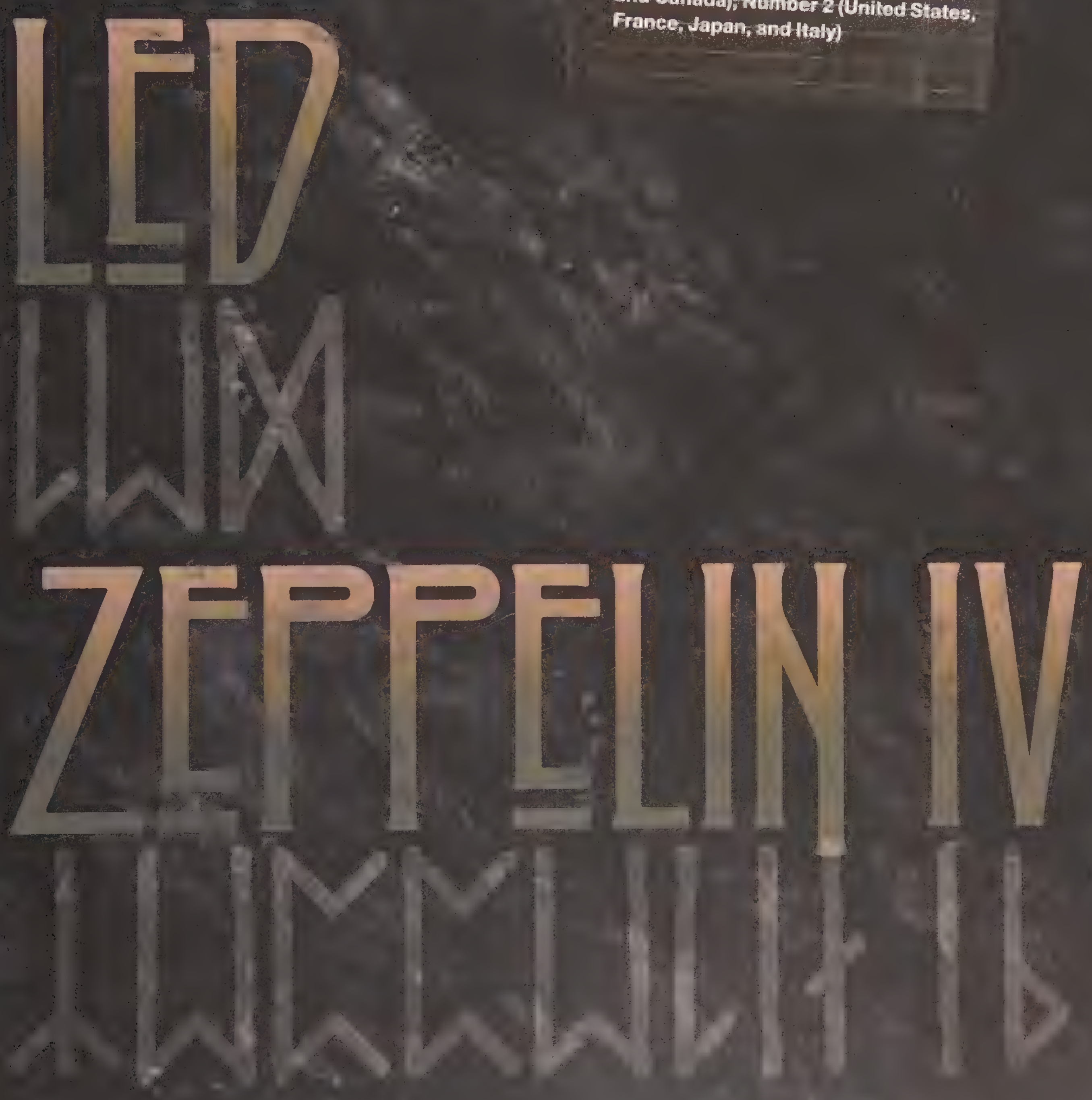
RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: November 19, 1971

Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: 2401012

United States: November 8, 1971

Number 1 (United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada); Number 2 (United States, France, Japan, and Italy)



Led Zeppelin playing Wembley on November 20, 1971, the day after the UK release of their fourth album. John Bonham's symbol is visible on his Ludwig bass drum.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Led Zeppelin's fourth album is also known by the name *Four Symbols*. This should really be the *Five Symbols* because the inner sleeve features a fifth, that of singer Sandy Denny, consisting of three equilateral triangles joined at one of their vertices, symbolizing the Godhead.

THE MASTERPIECE WITH THE FOUR SYMBOLS

With an album at number 1 on the UK, US, and Australian charts, had any band achieved more since the breakup of the Beatles? Yet according to the bigwigs at Atlantic, *Led Zeppelin III* could not, despite its impressive chart performance, be regarded as a commercial success. The third LP had quickly vanished from the charts, possibly because the band's folk-rock bent may have rattled fans. As far as Ahmet Ertegun was concerned, Led Zeppelin needed to get back to a winning formula of the first two albums, in which the quartet had established themselves as one of the pioneering bands of hard rock and heavy metal.

Doubts and Rumors...

As a shrewd manager and astute observer of the media, Peter Grant was well aware that absence makes the heart grow fonder. To this end he kept his protégés away from the television studio and concert stage for months on end—from September 19, 1970 (the day of the last two shows of the sixth American tour, at Madison Square Garden in New York City), until March 5, 1971 (the opening show of the third UK tour, at the Ulster Hall in Belfast). He even went as far as to turn down an apparently mouthwatering offer: one million dollars for a concert in West Germany on New Year's Eve that would be transmitted by satellite to movie theaters across the United States. The reason Grant gave for his refusal? "I found out that satellite sound can be affected by snowstorms. The promoters couldn't believe it, but it just wasn't right for us."[11] Hence the question being posed more and more insistently in the British media, and by the *Melody Maker* and the *New Musical Express* in particular: Would Led Zeppelin split up following a disappointing third album?

The Album

This is by no means to say that between November 1970 and January 1971 the four members of Led Zeppelin were merely biding their time, leaving to other artists the task of adding glorious new chapters to the history of rock. While the Rolling Stones were putting the finishing touches on *Sticky Fingers*, which would be hailed as another masterpiece upon its release in April 1971, and the Who and John Lennon were thinking about follow-ups to *Tommy* and *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, respectively, Jimmy Page, for one, was deeply immersed in creative work. In his Pangbourne house, in which he had installed an eight-track studio, he had started work on a number of songs, notably a sequence of arpeggiated chords that was soon to become the intro

The airship berths in Montreux on August 7, 1971.

to…"Stairway to Heaven." "I had a unit called the New Vista," he explains. "It was the deck that was used to record *Live at Leeds*. I thought it was a fabulous unit, really. When they were trying to get away from valves, one of the things they developed was the Vista and the Transistor. The Vista did sound very valvey."[60]

Jimmy Page and Robert Plant then went back to Wales, and at Bron-Yr-Aur cottage, where they had spent time prior to the sessions for their previous album, they wrote or applied the finishing touches to an assortment of lyrics and compositions. Further decisive stages in the making of the album include Island Studios, Headley Grange, Island Studios again, Sunset Sound, and Island Studios for the third and final time.

Whether it is referred to as *Four Symbols*, *ZoSo*, *The Runes Album*, *Led Zeppelin IV*, or quite simply *Untitled*, this fourth album is a brilliant testament to the musical diversity of the quartet: powerful, virtuoso rock in "Black Dog," "Misty Mountain Hop," and "Rock and Roll"; the ballad of olde England in the "The Battle of Evermore"; the ongoing influence of the blues in "Four Sticks" and "When the Levee Breaks"; the spirit of the counterculture in "Going to California"; and, perhaps most importantly of all, the coming together of folk, hard rock, and progressive rock in "Stairway to Heaven." This fourth album is one of superlatives, a musical shockwave. Not merely an important album, but one that has played a crucial part in the history of rock music, an LP that deserves a place alongside the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and the Stones' *Exile on Main St.*, alongside *Electric Ladyland* by Jimi Hendrix and *Tommy* by the Who. An album of eight songs (four on each side) in which occultism rubs shoulders with heroic fantasy and romanticism, rock 'n' roll with the ballad, pyrotechnic guitars with incantatory rhythms…the whole injected with an ingenious or perhaps quasi-alchemical admixture of frenzy on the one hand and tranquility on the other. An album, finally, in which blues and folk influences coalesce into a music of new inspiration that would attract countless followers on the rock, heavy metal, stoner rock, garage, and contemporary folk scenes…In short, *Four Symbols* is the guitar hero in all his flamboyance at large in the world of Tolkien (or Aleister Crowley)!

A Perennial Best-Seller

By the time *Led Zeppelin IV* was released in North America, not in April as originally intended but on November 8, 1971, and then in the United Kingdom and

Jimmy Page at home in Pangbourne.

the rest of the world on November 19, the four members of Led Zeppelin had well and truly been sucked back into the concert vortex with a UK tour from March 5 to April 1, then, following four shows in Europe (Denmark, Italy, Switzerland) and a fifth in Liverpool between May 3 and August 8, another tour in North America from August 19 to September 17, a Japanese tour from September 23 to 29, and finally a seventh UK tour from November 11 to December 21. In total, between March and December 1971, Led Zeppelin gave around sixty shows, in which they had the opportunity to perform two or sometimes three numbers from the new album: "Stairway to Heaven," "Going to California," and "Rock and Roll" (played on several occasions as an encore). That autumn of 1971, any fans who attended a Led Zeppelin concert, and especially those who had also read the early press reviews, came away with a pretty good idea of the musical flavor of the forthcoming album, and also the sense that it was going to be a very different animal from *Led Zeppelin III*, which had come as a surprise.

Atlantic, Peter Grant, and the four musicians themselves would not have to wait long for reassurance on the

Richard Cole and Jimmy Page at the Kyoto train station on September 25, 1971, during the band's first Japanese tour.

question of how the new opus would be received. It was a huge hit right from the start, and this time an enduring one. It got to number 1 in the United Kingdom (under the title *Four Symbols*) on November 28, just a week after its release, and also in Canada; number 2 in the United States (behind Carole King's *Tapestry*), France, Australia, Italy, and Japan; number 3 in Norway...The chart positions speak volumes, but even more impressive are the sales figures to date: more than twenty-three million copies sold in the United States, more than two million in Canada, nearly two million in the United Kingdom, and nearly a million in France. With total worldwide sales of more than thirty-seven million, Led Zeppelin's fourth album is one of the highest-selling records in the world (and the band's biggest seller by a considerable margin).

Significantly, the press, much of which had been scathing or even scornful in its treatment of the quartet following the release of *Led Zeppelin III*, showed a little more restraint this time. In the United Kingdom, Roy Carr wrote in the *NME*: "If *Zep III* gave the first indications that their music was by no means confined to power rock, then this new album consolidates their expanding maturity."[61] In the *Melody Maker*, although Chris Welch judged that "not all the tracks are brilliant," he emphasized the "bond between the players that reveals strength and a sense of direction not apparent on their last album."[62] On the other side of the Atlantic, Lenny Kaye (future guitarist with the Patti Smith Group) opened his article in *Rolling Stone* with the following words: "It might seem a bit incongruous to say that Led Zeppelin—a band never particularly known for its tendency to understate matters—has produced an album which is remarkable for its low-keyed and tasteful subtlety, but that's just the case here."[63]

For some years now, Led Zeppelin's fourth album has been admired across the board: it is currently number 1 on *Classic Rock*'s list of "100 Greatest Rock Albums Ever," and number 69 of *Rolling Stone*'s "500 Greatest Albums Ever." As for *Rock & Folk* ("300 Unmissable Albums 1965–1995"), the French magazine has expressed its enthusiasm through the pen of François Ducray: "*IV* is simply a monster. The ultimate metal: Zeppelinized, eternal."[23]

Magic Runes

Taking a shot at those journalists who delighted in shooting down *Led Zeppelin III*, the group chose a cover for their fourth album that contains not a scrap of written

The quartet and their manager, Peter Grant, at the Shinto shrine of Itsukushima (Miyajima).

information—no title or band name, not even the Atlantic Records logo. Just four symbols printed on the sepia inner sleeve above the track listing and legal info. From left to right, these symbols denote Jimmy Page (read ZoSo), John Paul Jones (three vesicae piscis, oval forms extending from the center of a circle to beyond its perimeter), John Bonham (three interlocking circles), and lastly Robert Plant (a feather within a circle).

These four symbols have been interpreted in a variety of ways. Bonham's does not really require a lengthy explanation. According to Robert Plant, it represents the "trilogy man, woman and child,"[60] and for Christians the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. With a touch of typically British humor, the singer adds that they discovered not long after, during a concert in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that "it was also the emblem of Ballantine beer,"[60] a favorite tipple of…John Bonham.

Plant explains that his ideogram "was drawn from sacred symbols of the ancient Mu civilisation which existed about 15,000 years ago as part of a lost continent somewhere in the Pacific Ocean between China and Mexico. […] These Mu people left stone tablets with their symbols inscribed into them all over the place…in Mexico, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, China and other places, and they all date from the same time period."[60] The book in which the singer found his symbol is called *The Sacred Symbols of Mu* (1933) by James Churchward. Having been inspired by existing research, the author put forward the theory that Mu had been the cradle of civilization before being swallowed up by the gods as a punishment for lapsing into decadence. In ancient Egypt, the symbol is said to refer to Maat, the Egyptian goddess of peace and justice whose emblem was an ostrich feather—according to the Larousse encyclopedia "the only bird's feather of equal breadth on either side of its central axis, suggesting evenness and thus fairness. The feather is contained within a circle, signifying the cycle of life and rebirth.

John Paul Jones's symbol seems to be a little more complex than those of Bonham or Plant. The vesica piscis (fish bladder) or mandorla is formed by the intersection of two identical circles, the center of one lying on the perimeter of the other. Geometrically, it serves as the basis for various polygons, but esoterically, in Sanskrit writing, it relates to the female genitalia and, in a wider, metaphorical sense, the creation of the world. "John Paul Jones' symbol, the second from the left, was found in a book about runes and was said to represent a person

Various alternative cover designs were produced for *Led Zeppelin IV*. In a number of South American countries, the album cover featured the four symbols along with the title *The New Led Zeppelin Album*. In the Soviet Union, the picture of a hunched old man was replaced by that of a farmer standing upright on his property. In the eighties there was even a pink vinyl version of the LP in the United Kingdom.

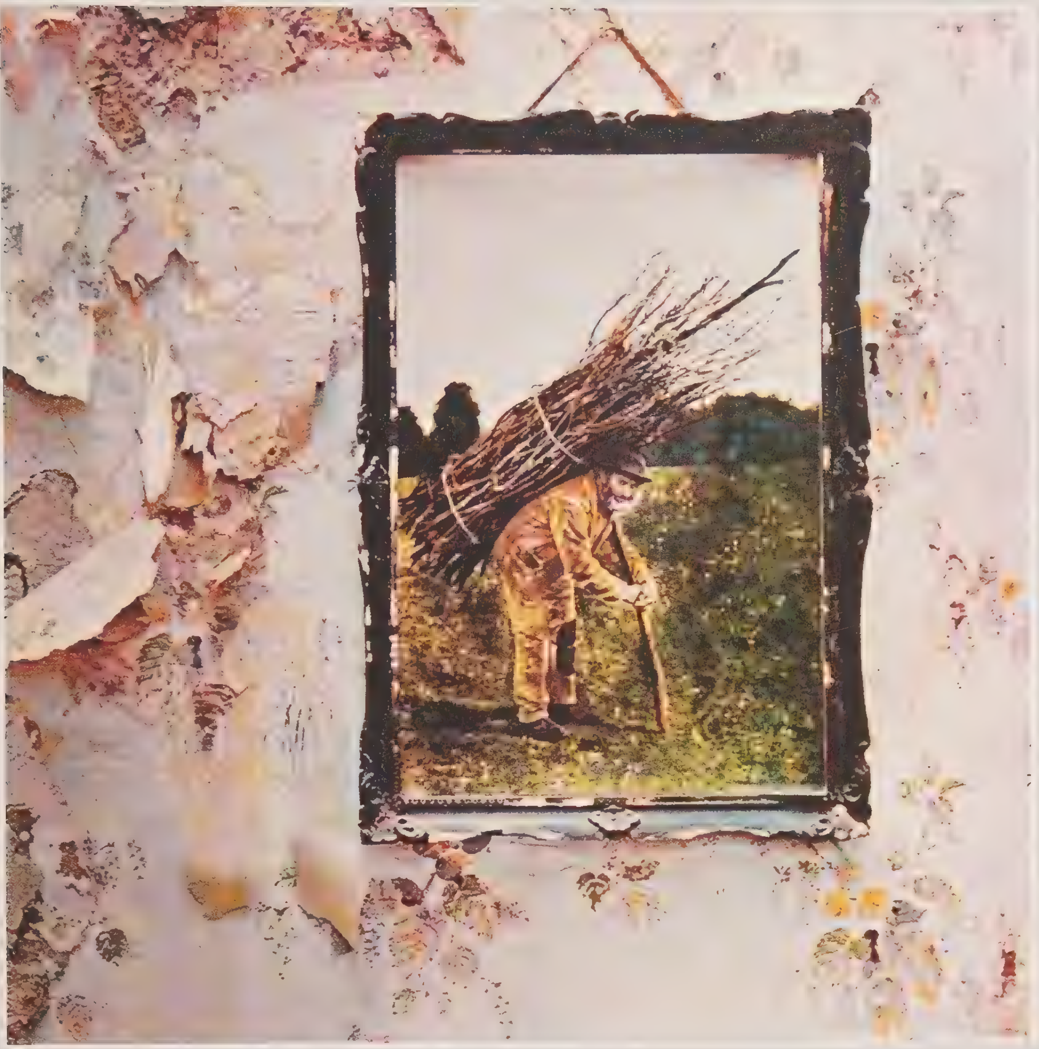
who is both confident and competent,"[60] explains Jimmy Page. In the book to which Page refers, *The Book of Signs*, the German typographer and type designer Rudolf Koch (1876–1934) brings together and redraws 493 ancient symbols (not just runes, but signs Christian, astronomical, astrological, and so on).

As for Jimmy Page's symbol, the guitarist describes it as follows: "Mine was something which I designed myself. A lot of people mistook it for a word 'Zoso'—and many people in the States still refer to the album as 'Zoso' which is a pity because it wasn't supposed to be a word at all but something entirely different. Basically the title thing was just another ruse to throw the media into chaos. We all had a good laugh when the record went into the charts and they had to reproduce the symbols instead of a conventional title."[60]

Page's ideogram is nevertheless the most hermetic of the four, and the one that has given rise to the largest number of interpretations. At the time of the fourth album, the Led Zeppelin guitarist had not yet invested in a specialist occult bookstore. (It was probably in 1974 that he invested in the Equinox, located at 4 Holland Street in the London district of Kensington, and named after Aleister Crowley's work *The Equinox of the Gods*). But he already had a strong interest in the occult. It was presumably in his reading of esoteric works that he came across the concept of ZoSo. These works may have included the *De Rerum Varietate* (1557) by the mathematician and occultist Girolamo Cardano, or *Le triple vocabulaire infernal: manuel du démonomane ou les ruses de l'enfer dévoilées* by Frinellan published in Paris in 1847, a manual thought to have its origins in the black magic grimoire known as *The Red Dragon* that may go all the way back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Page's symbol is a sigil of Saturn, the planet that rules the guitarist's astrological sign of Capricorn. It is written in the grimoire that "Saturn rules over the lives of mankind, extending or terminating it and making life happy or painful."[60] It could also be that the symbol is that of electrum, a term used by alchemists to denote a man-made metal alloy. Other hypotheses lead us into the realms of Rosicrucianism, the Theosophical Society, or even the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, (of which Aleister Crowley was, for a while, a member). On the other hand, *ZoSo* could simply be a stylized version of the number 666—the number of the beast in the New Testament book of Revelation.

The Sleeve

The sleeve of Led Zeppelin's fourth studio album has caused as much ink to be spilled as the symbols themselves. "It came to the point where we thought, right, on the next album we'll make it an untitled album with no information on it whatsoever, virtually saying if you don't like it, you don't have to buy it for the name,"[60] explains Jimmy Page. For the managers at Atlantic Records, this was "professional suicide."[60] However, the members of Led Zeppelin insisted on their chosen approach and stood their ground with the record company's lawyer: "We said we just wanted to rely purely on the music."[60]



The *Led Zeppelin IV* sleeve, displaying a sobriety that has given rise to various different interpretations.

Following spread: Robert Plant and John Paul Jones transforming Madison Square Garden into a temple of rock on September 3, 1971.

The cover illustration depicts a man of rustic appearance carrying a bundle of wood on his bent back and leaning with both hands on a sturdy walking stick, suggesting that he is wending his way home after a difficult day laboring in the fields. This photograph, or discolored painting, is framed and hangs on a dilapidated wall. On the back of the sleeve the gaping wall reveals some old buildings and lots in a British suburb. "The old man on the cover, carrying the wood, is in harmony with nature," explains Jimmy Page. "He takes from nature and gives back to the land. It's a natural circle. It's right. His old cottage gets pulled down and they put him in these urban slums—old slums, terrible places."[60] Page continues: "The old man is also the Hermit of the Tarot cards—a symbol of self-reliance and mystical wisdom."[60]

Like the four symbols, the identity of the old man on the cover aroused the fans' curiosity. Some thought he might be Old George Pickingill, a nineteenth-century farmworker, magician, and occultist connected to Satanist circles and a mentor of Aleister Crowley; others believed him to be William Holman Hunt, a painter and member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. It cannot be denied that there is a certain resemblance with both of these figures, but it should also be pointed out that by letting their imaginations run away with them, Led Zeppelin observers have reached some rash conclusions. The Led Zeppelin guitarist assures us: "I remember he [Plant] bought the picture in a junk shop in Reading. I was with him at the time."[60] The image inside the gatefold is of a hermit (what else?) standing on a mountaintop holding a lamp and gazing down at a small village in the valley below. This is the work of a friend of Jimmy Page's, Barrington Colby. "It's basically an illustration of a seeker aspiring to the light of truth,"[9] explains the guitarist. Finally, the aforementioned sepia inner sleeve bears the symbols and credits on one side and the words to "Stairway to Heaven" on the other. This is the first time the group had printed the lyrics to one of their songs on an album sleeve, and it is no fluke that the number they chose was "Stairway to Heaven." It is Jimmy Page who

Albion
Albion
Albion
3100

Sound engineer Andy Johns (seen here in 2011) hooked up again with Led Zeppelin for *IV*.

chose the typeface for the lyrics: "I found it in a really old Arts and Crafts magazine called *Studio*, which started in the late 1800's. I thought the lettering was so interesting I got someone to work up a whole alphabet."[9]

The Recording

The opening chapter of the extraordinary story of Led Zeppelin's fourth album was written by Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham back in May 1970, when they were working on a selection of songs in the distinctly Dickensian surroundings of Headley Grange, a former poorhouse. Some of these songs were subsequently finalized for *Led Zeppelin III*, while others were set aside and reworked for the *Four Symbols* album. Toward the end of the year, Page and Plant returned to the Welsh cottage of Bron-Yr-Aur, where *Led Zeppelin III* had seen the light of day a few months earlier.

Also during the course of the autumn (perhaps even earlier but either way definitely after the second Welsh retreat), the four musicians got together in Studio Two of Island Studios on Basing Street in London in November and December. There they recorded the backing tracks for a number of songs (including "Black Dog" on December 5 and an initial rough sketch of "Stairway to Heaven") with the help of Andy Johns, who had worked on the previous album. These sessions did not go as well as everyone had hoped. The good vibrations had not yet set in, and so a change of atmosphere was called for. After the Christmas vacation, which they spent with their families, Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham got together for some more sessions. Andy Johns, who had recently been helping to engineer *Sticky Fingers* (1971), suggested Stargroves, Mick Jagger's manor house at East Woodhay in Hampshire, which would enable them to use the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio at their leisure. "Mick Jagger had offered us his baronial mansion for £1,000 [or approximately $1,906 US] a week and Jimmy wouldn't pay it,"[47] recalls Andy Johns. "I'm not giving Mick Jagger a thousand pounds a week for his place," Page had reportedly said. "I'm going to find something better than that."[64] No doubt they all stayed for a few days anyway. At any rate, their eventual deal with the Stones was for the rent of the mobile studio only.

Return to Headley Grange

In January 1971, Led Zeppelin found themselves back at Headley Grange, in whose ten or so rooms the

Headley Grange: A former workhouse and Led Zeppelin's recording base in the heart of Hampshire.

previous album had been brought to life. "The old woman who owned it couldn't believe her luck when we said we wanted to rent her crumbling old ruin in the middle of winter," recalls Richard Cole. "The only one who actually liked being there was Jimmy. I think he enjoyed the fact that it was haunted, and he got himself a little room up at the very top of the house on the third floor, and he'd be there with his little electric fire."[65] Adds Jimmy Page: "You really do need the sort of facilities where you can take a break for a cup of tea and a wander [around] the garden, and then go back in and do whatever you have to do."[47]

The acoustics at Headley Grange were another factor in favor of Page's choice. They enabled everybody, and in particular the guitarist and Andy Johns, to experiment with the sonority of the various rooms in order to obtain different effects and colors. The best example is the extraordinary drum sound obtained by John Bonham on "When the Levee Breaks." For this he was recorded in the entrance hall of the house with just a pair of Beyerdynamic M160 mics. Jimmy Page sums up the qualities of the place as follows: "We were continually moving amps and mikes around the house and creating new recording spaces, which I'm sure affects the listener on a subliminal, subconscious level. It's an idea that I had been developing since our first album, but working at Headley allowed us to take it to the next level."[9]

At Headley Grange, the four members of Led Zeppelin composed, wrote lyrics, rehearsed, and worked on the recordings from Island Studios without letup. "It was very spontaneous most of the time in Led Zeppelin. Things were created virtually as a four-piece band. It was Jimmy Page bringing in cassettes or ideas that were then created on the spot. Sometimes John Paul Jones would contribute the main leading part of the song, and then it would be a pretty quick arrangement of bits and pieces so that the thing fitted together rather quickly."[47] One week later, by the time the "sixth" Rolling Stone, Ian Stewart, turned up behind the wheel of the mobile studio, various songs were ready to be recorded. At Headley Grange the musicians were able to get down a backing track for each one. And there were enough of them to fill

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards recording vocals at Sunset Studios in October 1969 during the sessions for *Let It Bleed.* With them is Bonnie Bramlett.

a double album. But according to Robert Plant, Led Zeppelin was not yet ready to take that decisive step: “We decided not this time, but we’ve been saying not this time since the second album.”[65]

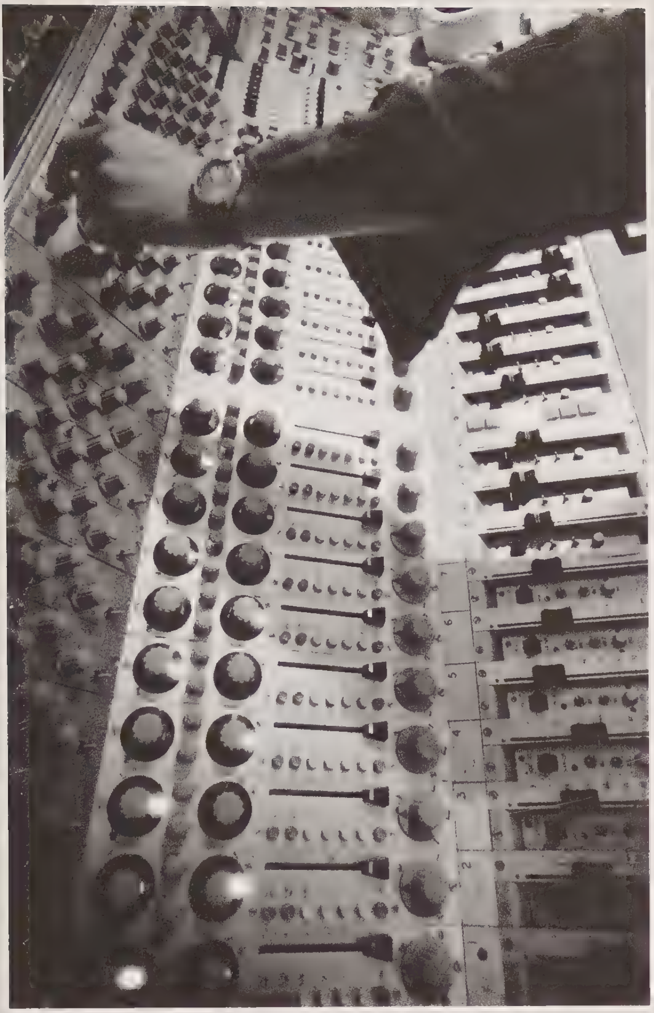
A Tense Atmosphere in the Studio

In early 1971, after Headley Grange, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham returned to Island Studios (still in the company of Andy Johns) to continue recording and to add all the necessary overdubs. While the Headley Grange configuration was perfect for certain tracks and certain instruments—such as Bonham’s drums—it was not so good for the guitars, which needed a more controlled environment. As Page confirms: “A lot of the guitars recorded there were used as guide tracks and re-recorded later at Island. However, ‘Levee’ was an exception.”[9]

Phill Brown, a young sound engineer who had earned his spurs at Olympic Studios in 1968 as an assistant engineer on the Rolling Stones’ *Beggars Banquet*, had been working at Island Studios since July 1970. Brown would go on to enjoy a prestigious career working for artists such as Jeff Beck, Harry Nilsson, Bob Marley, Robert Palmer, and Talk Talk, to name just a few. In his book *Are We Still Rolling?* published in 2010, Brown describes recording the overdubs for “Stairway to Heaven” (including the definitive solo) and “Four Sticks” in May 1971. He seems to have mixed up his dates, however, as Led Zeppelin was only at Island in February for overdubbing and in mid-April for mixing. The astonishing thing is that Brown’s name does not feature among the album credits. Apparently, relations were far from cordial, and the engineer found it difficult to cope with the tense climate established by Peter Grant. According to Brown, the recording process was fastidious, the breaks rare, and the atmosphere on the cool side: “I would be at the desk for some 15 to 18 hours a day [...]. It was very tiring, and the severe atmosphere generated by Peter, his minders and the band did not leave me with warm memories.”[66] So where was Andy Johns, of whom there is no mention whatsoever in Brown’s account? Furthermore, Brown says he worked for Led Zeppelin for five days. Was this as engineer or assistant engineer?

Mixing and Remixing

Either way, Page, Peter Grant, and Andy Johns are known to have flown out to Los Angeles on February 9. The studio chosen for the mixing was Sunset Sound at 6650 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood. Established at the end of the fifties by Salvador “Tutti Camarata, this studio had played an important role in the story of rock in the sixties. Prior to Led Zeppelin’s arrival, the Beach Boys recorded part of the legendary *Pet Sounds* (1966) there, the Doors the whole of their first two albums (*The Doors* and *Strange Days*, both 1967), and Janis Joplin her no less legendary (and also posthumous) *Pearl* (1971). The studio was also used by the Rolling Stones (for the mixing



The mixing desk of the Rolling Stones Mobile, hired by Led Zeppelin for their Headley Grange sessions.

THE ROLLING STONES MOBILE STUDIO

The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio remained the property of the Stones until the death of Ian Stewart in 1985. Then Bill Wyman, the group's bassist, bought it. Wyman used it until 1993 for his A.I.M.S. (Ambition, Ideas, Motivation, Success) project, whose purpose was to foster young musicians. The last artist to use it for a commercial recording was Mick's brother, Chris, for *Chris Jagger's Atcha* (1994). It now belongs to the National Music Centre in Calgary.

of *Exile on Main St.*, 1972) and the cream of the Californian scene (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Joni Mitchell), not to mention the likes of Paul McCartney and Robert Palmer.

If Andy Johns suggested Sunset Sound, it was not only because he had just recorded the album *Sailor's Delight* by the group Sky (the future Knack) there and was a fan of the sound ("I had mixed an album with Gary Wright at Sunset and there were some wonderful mixes coming out of that studio,"[64] he would later recall) but also, and most importantly, because he was having a fling with a charming young woman who lived in Los Angeles—a fling that had turned his head to the extent that he lost two freshly recorded tapes by the group (one of them containing no less a track than "Four Sticks"!) in London. However, there was worse to come. "I thought Sunset was a cool place," he explains, "but they had changed the room since I was last there. I don't know what happened."[64] The room he knew so well had indeed been completely refurbished. He therefore had to get his head around the idea of mixing in a different space, one with fabulous acoustics but that he did not know his way around anymore.

What were they to do, take a plane home? Out of the question because of the aftershocks of the Sylmar earthquake in the San Fernando Valley (January 1971), which had grounded all aircraft at Los Angeles International Airport. And besides, Andy Johns and Jimmy Page were having a good time and enjoying some excellent company in Los Angeles. "That was a mistake, we should have just gone home, but I didn't want to and I don't think Jimmy did either,"[60] Johns would later admit.

So they continued their work on the Pacific Coast… After ten days or so, Page and Johns returned to London and got together with the others at Olympic Studios to listen to the results. Bitter disappointment! The mix the four members of Led Zeppelin and Andy Johns heard playing back through the monitors at Olympic was light-years away from what they had expected. The sound was dull, lacking higher frequencies. Andy Johns was devastated: "Jimmy and I are sitting on the floor with heads in our hands going 'What the hell is this?' Then we played

Led Zeppelin communing with the Swiss public between two recording sessions for *IV.*

the next one and the next one…and it all sounded 'orrible."[64] Their reaction was total incomprehension. Jimmy Page's after-the-event analysis was as follows: "It had sounded all right to me, but the speakers were lying. It wasn't the balance; it was the actual sound that was on the tape. All I can put it down to was the fact that the speakers in LA and the monitoring system in that room were just very bright—and they lied. It wasn't the true sound."[47] Robert Plant was irate, considering Johns's work to have been worse than useless. The response was immediate. Jimmy Page and Andy Johns proceeded to remix the whole of the album with the exception of "When the Levee Breaks." But first of all, the band had a UK tour and some European dates to play. Island Studios was booked for mid-April for the remix. After that the tapes were sent to Trident Studios in London for mastering and then on to Presswell Records in the United States for pressing. As a result, the release of the album was pushed back a few months, from April to November 1971. Led Zeppelin would never work with Andy Johns again! "It had all cost a few bob," explains Johns, "flying us over there to LA and staying at the Hyatt House. And I know that Bonzo was furious about it."[64]

In the end, the recording of Led Zeppelin's fourth album took a total of five months, from December 1970 to April 1971. But the actual studio time was relatively short, mainly because of the quality of the songs being recorded: less than a week at Island in November and December, six days with the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio in January (not including the week of rehearsing), five days back at Island in February, ten days at Sunset Sound later the same month, and probably a week for the remix at Island in April. All in all, less than two months in the studio to make a rock masterpiece. And in addition to the eight numbers that made it onto the album, they recorded another four that would be included on later releases: "No Quarter" on *Houses of the Holy* (1973), and "Boogie with Stu," "Night Flight," and "Down by the Seaside" (the latter had already been worked on during the recording of *Led Zeppelin III*) on *Physical Graffiti* (1975).

The Team

Andy Johns engineered all the recordings for the album. The only exception is an alternative mix of "When the Levee Breaks" that can be found on CD2 of the deluxe

The quartet around the time of *IV.* A beer for Bonham, the ZoSo symbol for Page.

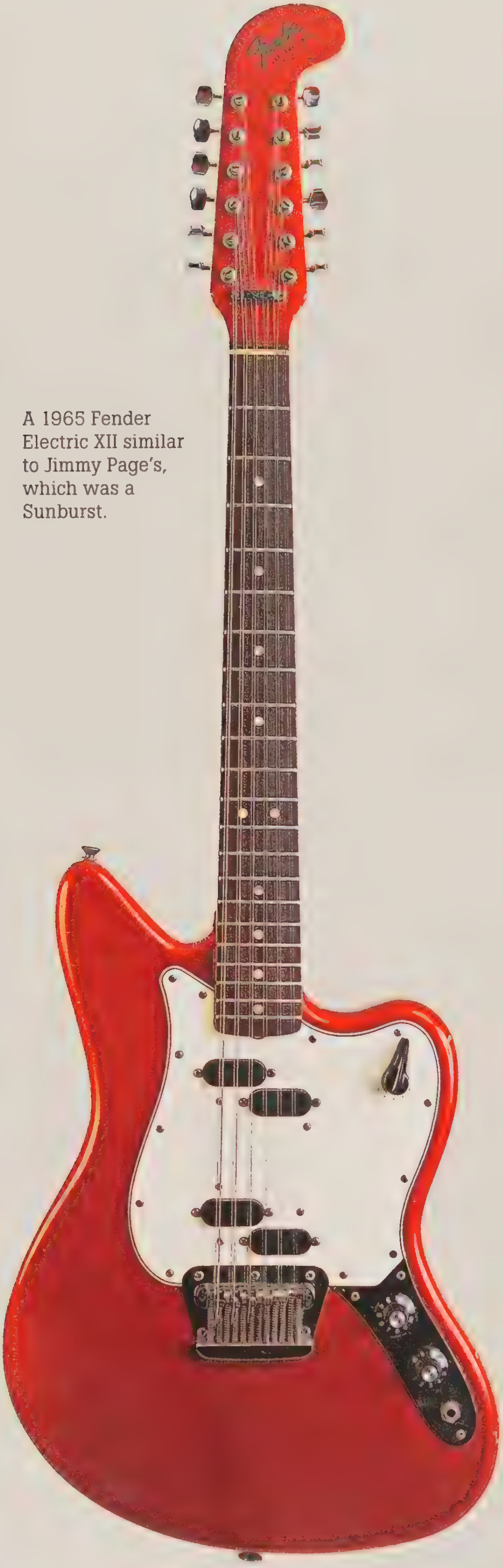
edition, for which George Chkiantz stepped into his shoes. If Phill Brown was involved in the recording of the album, his name does not appear in the credits. Unfortunately it has not been possible to clearly identify all the various assistant engineers. Digs (Richard Digby-Smith?) and Tony (?) are known to have been in attendance at Island Studios, and someone named Jerry was assisting Chkiantz, probably in the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. Finally, Drew Griffiths made additional recordings for the alternative version of "When the Levee Breaks," renamed "If It Keeps on Raining," which is included on CD2 of the deluxe edition of *Coda*, released in 2015.

Technical Details

The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, which Led Zeppelin had had an opportunity to try out during the recording of *Led Zeppelin III*, was installed in a BMC Laird truck that had been curiously resprayed in a camouflage design. This mobile studio benefited from some of the most advanced technology of the day. It was equipped with a two-inch, sixteen-track 3M M56 tape machine plus an Ampex AG-440 eight-track, a Helios console with twenty inputs and sixteen outputs, and Audio Design AD&R F600 and F700 compressors. The monitors were four Tannoy Reds inside Lockwood cabinets.

Island Studios on Basing Street in London was familiar territory to the group, who had availed themselves of its facilities when making their previous album. The equipment was by and large the same as during their last spell there (see *Led Zeppelin III*).

By choosing to mix at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles, which enjoyed an international reputation, not least for technical quality, Jimmy Page and Andy Johns were exposing themselves to technology that in certain respects lagged behind that of the English studios. This was certainly the case with the panning system (switches on each of the channels on a mixing desk that enable a sound to be specifically positioned within the stereo soundfield). Johns explains, "I'll never forget at Sunset Sound mixing Zeppelin stuff and I said, 'Excuse me, I need to pan something.' And the guy went, 'Oh, hang on,' and he got on the phone and said, 'Bring Andy the pan pot'! [laughs] And they brought this thing in the size of a woman's handbag, very proudly, a big knob on a gurney, and presented it!"[67] The console



A 1965 Fender Electric XII similar to Jimmy Page's, which was a Sunburst.

there seems to have been an API, but unfortunately the identity of the monitors, which had so disoriented Andy Johns during the mix, remains unknown. They were probably JBL. However, the mix of "When the Levee Breaks" on the album is the very same that was done at Sunset Sound, faithful to what Page and Johns heard playing through the control room monitors. What had been responsible for degrading the quality of the other mixes therefore remains a mystery. Might black magic have had something to do with it?

It is interesting to note that to record the guitars, Andy Johns generally used a Universal Audio 1176LN Limiting Amplifier compressor, responsible for one of the characteristics of Page's sound.

The Instruments

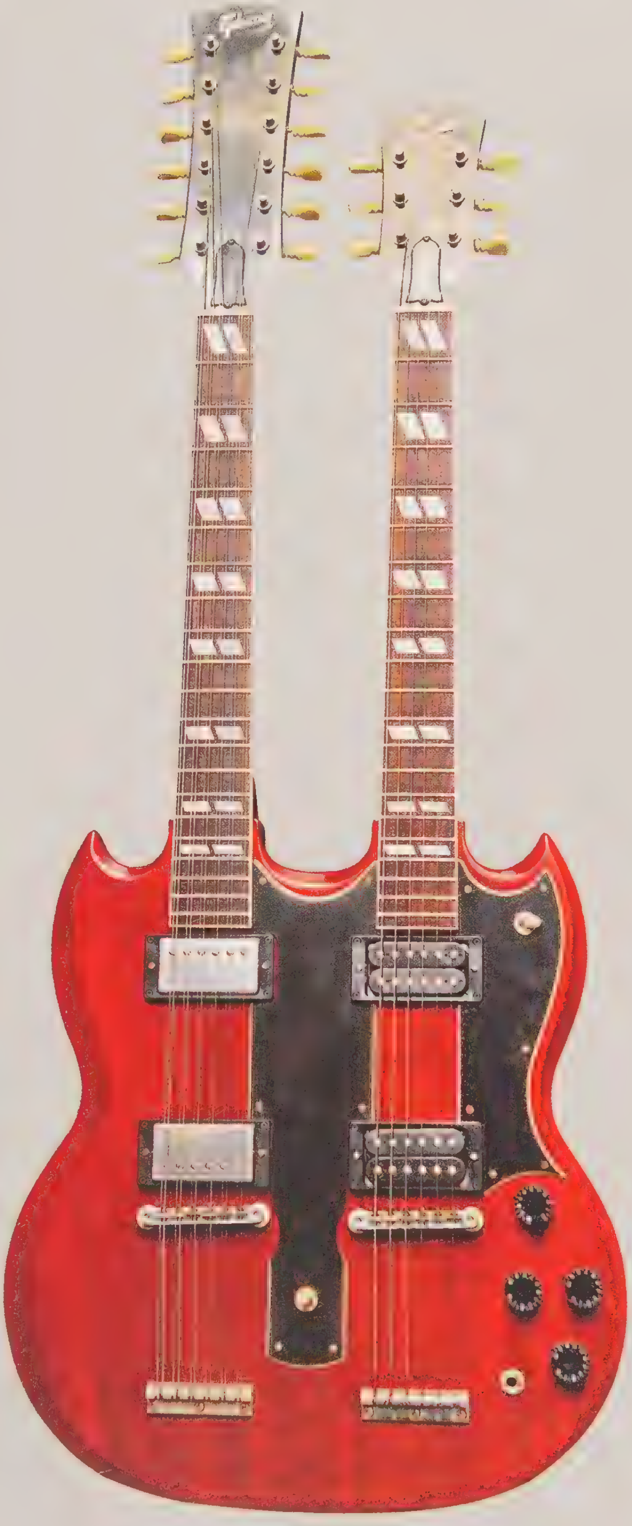
With this new album, Jimmy Page expands his guitar palette. While his 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One" remains his point of reference, for his solo on "Stairway to Heaven" he goes back to his superb 1959 "Dragon Telecaster" played through the Supro combo amp, exactly as on *Led Zeppelin I*. Another instrument he brings out again is his Vox Phantom XII, which he had played on the second album. He also debuts a second electric twelve-string, a 1965 Fender Electric XII Sunburst bought during his Yardbirds days. Andy Johns mentions a different model, however, claiming that "Jimmy was always running his 12-string Rickenbacker through a box."[64] If this is the case, it could only be the Rickenbacker 360/12 he acquired in 1969. This seems highly improbable, however, as Page has never mentioned it.

The main guitar event of this period, albeit one that did not impact on his studio work, was Page's use in concerts of his famous 1968 Gibson EDS-1275 double-neck

EARL
HOOKER

Left: Earl Hooker, one of the first guitarists to play a Gibson double-neck.

Below: The famous Gibson EDS-1275, which had been custom-built so that Jimmy Page could play "Stairway to Heaven" live.



guitar, which would attract the attention of the media and the fans alike. This instrument was the solution to a very specific dilemma: how to perform both the six- and the twelve-string guitar parts in "Stairway to Heaven" live onstage with no time to change instruments. The double neck provided the perfect answer. He was not the first to use such an instrument: Earl Hooker had beaten him to it by a few years. Unfortunately, by 1971 Gibson had stopped making this particular model and so Page had to have one custom built. Since then, the EDS-1275 has played an important part in establishing Page's "guitar hero" image. Finally, he continues to use his Harmony Sovereign H1260 and again borrows John Paul Jones's C. F. Martin A-style mandolin. For effects, he uses a Vox King Wah and a Binson Echorec 2.

John Paul Jones distinguishes himself on various instruments in addition to his Fender Jazz Bass and Martin mandolin: a Hohner Electra-piano, which can also be heard on "You Shook Me" on the first album, various recorders (soprano, tenor, and bass) in the intro to "Stairway to Heaven," and finally, on "Four Sticks," what is almost certainly a Moog IIIP, a synthesizer that had made a brief appearance on *Led Zeppelin III*.

John Bonham continues to play his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" kit, and Robert Plant plays a Hohner Marine Band harmonica (in B-flat) on "When the Levee Breaks."

This Led Zeppelin masterpiece opens with "Black Dog" and an irresistible riff from…John Paul Jones, played with pick on his Jazz Bass.

BLACK DOG

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones / 4:55

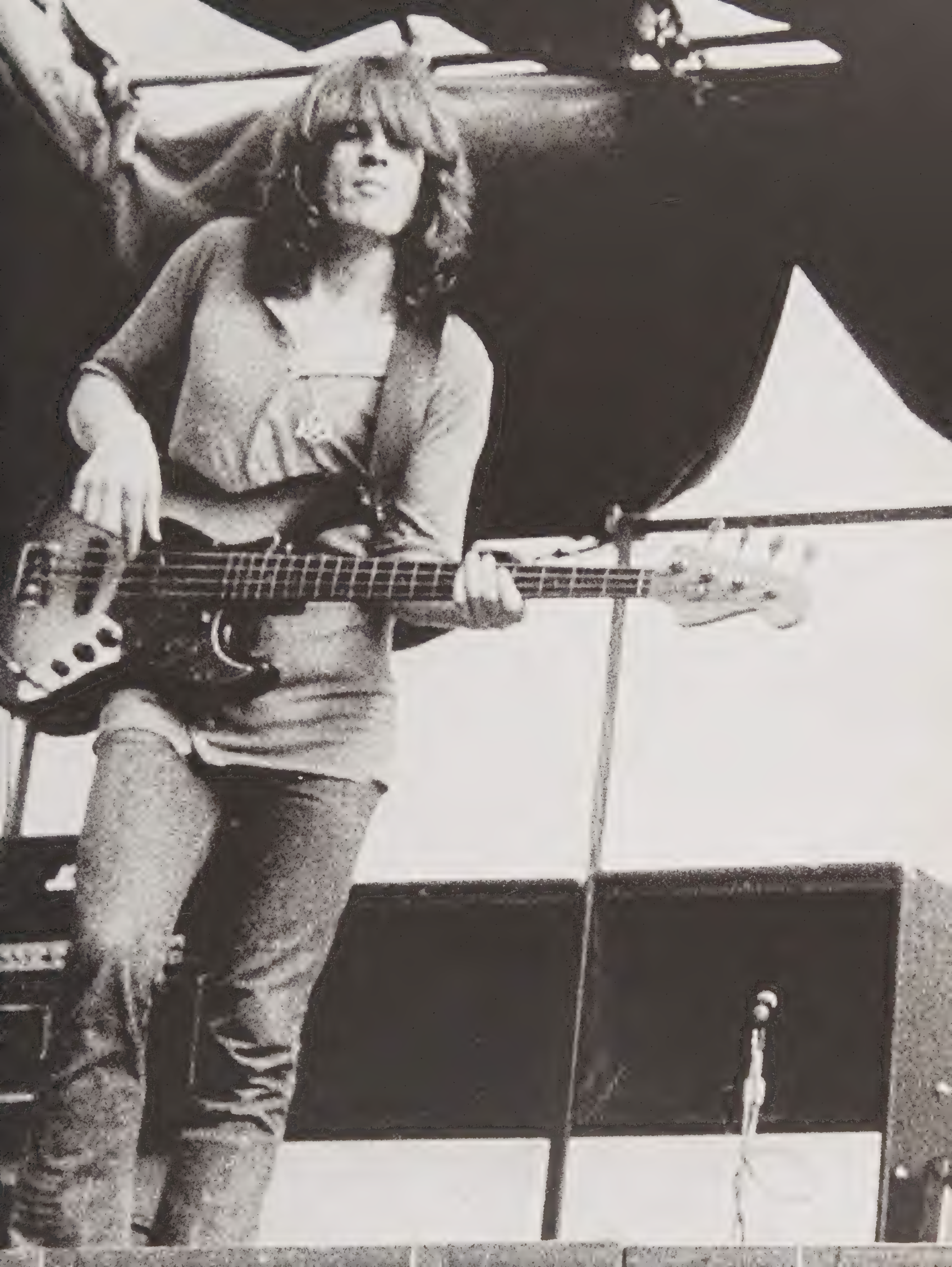
Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: December 1970, February 1971 (Studio Two)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

Watch your honey drip, sings Robert Plant in "Black Dog." It was surely in allusion to this song that the singer named the band he formed in 1981…the Honeydrippers. In 1984 Jimmy Page joined them for the sessions for *The Honeydrippers: Volume One* ("Sea of Love" and "I Get a Thrill").

Genesis

Hey, hey, mama, said the way you move/Gonna make you sweat, gonna make you groove…Led Zeppelin gets their fourth album rolling with a song of red-hot eroticism carried by the voice of Robert Plant. The lyricist with the long, golden locks has not forgotten the timeless lessons or themes of the bluesmen. In this particular case the heroine exercises an extraordinary, fantastical power over the first-person narrator, starting with the way she walks, which causes his adrenaline to soar: *Watch your honey drip, can't keep away.* In short, she sets his soul on fire and he falls under her spell to such an extent that she is able to get away with whatever she wants: spending his money, taking his car, *telling her friends she's gonna be a star.* All the same, in the end the fervent lover sees her deception for what it is: *A big-legged woman ain't got no soul*, sings Robert Plant by way of a moral. Here, the Led Zeppelin singer is following directly in the footsteps of blues pioneers such as Robert Johnson and Howlin' Wolf, for whom physical love is like a sort of diabolical possession. *Got a flaming heart, can't get my fill, eyes that shine a burning red*: this line also clearly connects with the old tradition of seeing the blues as the music of the devil. At any rate, Plant sings of lust and of torrid eroticism with consummate artistry.

Although the song is called "Black Dog," at no point do the lyrics mention such a creature. For an explanation we have to go back to Headley Grange, where a black Labrador was continually hanging around. "We didn't know his name," explains Jimmy Page, "we just called him 'black dog.'"[24] The animal in question used to disappear in the evening and return exhausted in the early morning. He would then rest all day before going off again at dusk. Onstage in 1972, Robert Plant described how "he used to go see this old lady [dog] quite regularly…But after he'd 'boogied' and everything else, he couldn't get back. [So] we used to carry him back."[24]



IN YOUR HEADPHONES

In order to help his bandmates resume the riff correctly after each of Robert Plant's a capella interventions, John Bonham marks time with his sticks. Although Andy Johns and Jimmy Page tried to erase these audible beats during the mixing, they can still be made out here and there, for example at 0:12, 0:24, 0:31, 0:36, 1:06, 1:17, and later on too.

In 1988, Robert Plant would incorporate an excerpt from "Black Dog" into his song "Tall Cool One" (on the album *Now and Zen*). This can be heard from 3:55 (*Hey, mama!*) during the outro. Also note that the guitar solo is played by a certain Jimmy Page.

"Black Dog" is a high-octane blues-rock number that originated with John Paul Jones. "My dad had taught me this very easy notation system using note values and numbers, so I wrote it on a bit of paper on the train coming back from rehearsal in Jimmy's house in Pangbourne,"[68] he told *Mojo* magazine. The Led Zeppelin bassist went on to explain in various interviews that the relentless guitar riff—one of the quartet's best, somewhere between "Whole Lotta Love" and "Immigrant Song"—had come to him after he had listened to *Electric Mud*, the psychedelic blues-rock album recorded by Muddy Waters in 1968 with Marshall Chess (the son of Leonard) as producer. But he was mistaken. It was not until decades after the release of *Led Zeppelin IV*, again in the columns of *Mojo* (December 2007) that he admitted to having confused *Electric Mud* and *The Howlin' Wolf Album* (1969), also produced by Marshall Chess: "Once I was really getting into a riff, with Bonzo playing along, and it was great—until I realised it was the theme to Melvyn Bragg's South Bank Show [Paganini's Caprice no. 24]. The riff of 'Black Dog' started the same way, a jam based on something I'd heard on a new release by Howlin' Wolf, a blues lick that went round and round and didn't end when you thought it was going to."[68]

"Black Dog" was released as a single (with "Misty Mountain Hop" on the flip side) in numerous countries, from the United States via continental Europe to Australia (bypassing the United Kingdom) in December 1971. It had been part of Led Zeppelin's set list since their April 1971 UK tour (note the live version on the 1997 *BBC Sessions*) and would remain so virtually to the end (with the exception of the 1977–July 1979 period). The song reached number 15 on the Billboard chart of January 15, 1972. It currently sits at number 294 on *Rolling Stone*'s list of "500 Greatest Songs of All Time."

Production

"Black Dog" is one of the first songs for the new album that the group worked on in the studio, recording an initial version on December 5, 1970, at Island Studios in London. This track, which opens their fourth opus, is actually the fruit of a musical collaboration between John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page. "We were always trying to encourage [Jones] to come up with bits and pieces, so to speak, because that's usually what they were; he never came up with a complete whole song or anything,"[47] says Page. But this time, the riff John Paul Jones proposed to his bandmates was worth the bassist's weight in gold. Despite having acknowledged his error in citing *Electric Mud* by Muddy Waters as his main inspiration, he may well have been influenced by the color and articulation of various tracks on that album, such as "She's Alright." The immediate trigger, however, was "Smokestack Lightning" on *The Howlin' Wolf Album*. Jones's riff, which is rhythmically complex with its unaccustomed and complex changes in time signature, gave the group a bit of trouble. The most problematic part can be written out in bars of 9/8, 5/8, and 4/4, whereas it was originally set down in 3/16 and is impossible to play in that form. This complexity, however, is deliberate, as Jones himself explains: "I wanted to try an electric blues with a rolling bass part. But it couldn't be too simple [...]. We struggled with the turn-around, until [John] Bonham figured out that you just four-time as if there's no turn-around. That was the secret."[69]

The song was not yet finished, however. It was Jimmy Page who came up with the solution: "I then suggested that we build a song similar in structure to Fleetwood

Neil Young, whose guitar sound on "Cinnamon Girl" was a model for "Black Dog."

Mac's 'Oh Well.' In other words, I wanted to create a call and response between Robert's vocal and the band."[9] After a number of attempts at Island Studios in December 1970, the group reworked "Black Dog" at Headley Grange at the beginning of January 1971 with the help of the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. Having got the rhythm track down, the four musicians then came together again in Island's Studio Two in February to add the various overdubs.

Triple Riff

"Black Dog" opens with some curious sounds, a not uncommon feature on Jimmy Page–produced numbers, fond as the guitarist is of starting tracks in an unexpected manner (for example "Immigrant Song" or "Friends" on *Led Zeppelin III*). These sounds are actually the beginning of the various guitar tracks opening simultaneously before the song gets under way, creating a sort of sonic collage in which the tape can be heard starting up against a background of strummed and picked strings—the guitars warming up, as Page would later put it. We then hear the extraordinary voice of Robert Plant, who launches into his vocal line unaccompanied, just as Page had suggested. Enhanced by reverb and a reasonably short delay, almost rockabilly-style, Plant sings in a high range and with phenomenal vocal power. He got his part down in barely two takes in the sitting room at Headley Grange, its walls lined with egg boxes in order to dampen any undesirable resonance. And suddenly the group enters with Jones's riff. The rhythm section of bass and drums is again impressively efficient, Jones playing his Jazz Bass with a pick, producing a metallic and somewhat aggressive sound, and Bonzo on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle," smacking his drums unfailingly hard and laying down an impressive groove.

In attacking the riff, Jimmy Page has a somewhat unfamiliar guitar sound. Impressed by the guitars on Neil Young's "Cinnamon Girl" (on the album *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, released in 1969), the guitarist, who until now had not been entirely satisfied with his own sound, asked Andy Johns to get him closer to that of the Canadian. They found the solution together at Island Studios: "We put my Les Paul through a direct box, and from there into a mic channel. We used the mic amp of the mixing board to get distortion. Then we ran it through two Urei 1176 Universal compressors in series."[4] These were actually Universal Audio 1176LN Limiting Amplifier compressors, the first serving as an

Peter Green and John McVie of Fleetwood Mac rehearsing in 1969. "Oh Well" was one of the influences on "Black Dog."
Opposite: Robert Plant, who displays consummate artistry as a rock singer on "Black Dog."

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The Fleetwood Mac song "Oh Well" which Jimmy Page suggested as a model for the a cappella parts in "Black Dog," was released as a single in September 1969 and got to number 2 in the United Kingdom in November. Jimmy Page would later perform "Oh Well" with the Black Crowes (*Live at the Greek*, 2000).

amplifier (with no compression) and the second as a compressor. Andy Johns then helped Page to bulk out the resulting sound. "My contribution to that was triple-tracking the guitar riff played on a Gibson Les Paul,"[64] explains Johns. So the guitar was recorded on three tracks: left, right, and center. "It worked really well" with the two 1176LNs connected in series, continues Johns, "but as soon as Jimmy stopped playing, with all that gain it went 'Ssshh woarg!'"[64] Years later, Page would say he thought the guitars, curiously, "almost sound like an analog synthesizer."[4] It is interesting to note that he harmonizes his riff toward the end of the song, between 3:07 and 3:24. Finally, he launches into a superb solo after the last of Robert Plant's a cappella vocal parts. (The singer is also harmonizing with himself.) This time they used a different recording method, as Page himself explains: "The solos were recorded in a more standard way. […] I wanted a totally different tone color. So I ran my guitar through a Leslie and miked that in the usual way."[9]

"Black Dog" is one of the group's classic tracks. The success it has enjoyed since its release is actually a little curious, however, given that it is a rhythmically complex piece of music that contains some doubtful ensemble work, for example between 0:41 and 0:47, where the guitars are not exactly in synch with Bonham's drums. But the genius of these four musicians is to have passed off this rhythmic "error" as a rock 'n' roll curiosity, one that in no way detracts from the quality of this Led Zeppelin anthem.

Not only did Ian Stewart, the "sixth" Rolling Stone, deliver the mobile studio to Headley Grange, he also plays piano on "Rock and Roll."

ROCK AND ROLL

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham / 3:40

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, tambourine (?)
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Ian Stewart: piano
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: February 1971 (Studio Two)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

On July 13, 1985, Led Zeppelin performed "Rock and Roll" for the first time since the death of John Bonham in 1980. The track opened their set at Live Aid, the gigantic concert organized by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure that took place simultaneously in London and Philadelphia. It took two drummers to replace Bonzo: Tony Thompson and Phil Collins. Unfortunately, the performance was pretty much a disaster, the blame for which has been passed around ever since. Led Zeppelin even went as far as to ask not to be included in the DVD of the concert.

Genesis

"Rock and Roll" evolved out of a jam at Headley Grange. The four members of Led Zeppelin were working on "Four Sticks" but without really getting anywhere. During a welcome tea break, John Bonham, going back to his roots, started playing the infernal rhythm of "Keep A Knockin'," the rock 'n' roll number recorded by Little Richard in 1957 with the excellent New Orleans drummer Charles Connor. Jimmy Page immediately picked up his 1959 Les Paul, only to be followed in by John Paul Jones and Ian Stewart, who had sat himself down at the piano, and then Robert Plant. "I played the riff automatically, that was 'Rock and Roll' and we got through the whole first verse," explains Jimmy Page. "We said this is great, forget 'Four Sticks,' let's work on this and things were coming out like that. It was a spontaneous combustion."[60] In another interview he adds: "If something felt right, we didn't question it. If something really magical is coming through, then you follow it. It was all part of the process. We had to explore, we had to delve. We tried to take advantage of everything that was being offered to us."[9]

On the one hand, then, were the four members of Led Zeppelin, and on the other, Ian Stewart on piano. Not only was Stewart the Stones' roadie who had delivered the mobile studio to Headley Grange, he had also been a member of the Stones before being callously ejected by the band's manager, Andrew Loog Oldham, who had judged Stewart's appearance to be incompatible with the look of the other five. Jimmy Page had known him since the sixties (when they both lived in Epsom), and valued him as both a friend and a musician. "Stu was extremely shy, but he was an astonishing piano player," says Page. "He was a true boogie-woogie virtuoso."[9] And so from the keyboard of this improbable piano he lent his innate sense of rock 'n' roll to Led Zeppelin with the same mastery that he had brought to his performances with the Stones a few years before.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

At the beginning of the second verse, Robert Plant mentions the *book of love*. He is referring to "The Book of Love" by the doo-wop group the Monotones, which went to number 5 on the Billboard chart in April 1958.

At the Led Zeppelin concert of June 23, 1977, at the Forum in Inglewood, California, Keith Moon joined John Bonham onstage for a demonic version of "Rock and Roll."

While Page, Jones, Bonham, and Stewart were revisiting the glories of rock 'n' roll past, Plant was setting down a few well-chosen phrases on paper. *It's been a long time since I rock 'n' rolled*; *It seems so long since we walked in the moonlight, making vows that just couldn't work right*: *love*, *solitude*, and *failure* are the three keywords that inspired the lyrics for this song, which was initially, with some logic, called "It's Been a Long Time."

Having come into existence with lightning speed, from the 1972 Japanese and UK tours onward, "Rock and Roll" frequently served as a curtain-raiser for Led Zeppelin shows. Many years later, at the famous 2007 concert in London, it was played as an encore. It is also worth mentioning the live versions on *How the West Was Won* (2003) and the DVD *Led Zeppelin* (2003).

Production

A comparison between Charles Connor's drum intro on Little Richard's "Keep A Knockin'" and John Bonham's on "Rock and Roll" throws up no obvious differences. But these explosive few bars are where the tribute ends, the rest of the track owing nothing to anyone other than the group itself. Andy Johns captured Bonzo's Ludwig kit, which he positioned in the Headley Grange sitting room, using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, obtaining that incredibly live and powerful sound that Led Zeppelin seemed to be the only ones to cultivate at this point in time. It was not exactly a straightforward process, however: "['Rock and Roll'] was a little tough to record," explains Johns, "because with the hi-hat being so open and [Bonham] hitting it that hard it was difficult to control. But I managed somehow or another."[64] The results are brilliant and impart an incomparable energy to the track. Although Bonham had thoroughly assimilated the techniques of the early boogie and rock 'n' roll drummers, his drumming here, while powerful, has less of a swing than usual. Despite being supported by some very good bass from John Paul Jones, he chooses on this occasion to emphasize the dynamism of his stroke. Moreover, it should be pointed out that to attack the snare drum and hi-hat with the same rhythmic figure for so long and with such consistency is no easy feat. He is accompanied throughout by a tambourine thought to be played by Robert Plant.

Back to the Roots of Rock

Plant throws himself into a vocal part that lies at the limit of his range, but the results are incredible. His performance is furiously energetic and once again confirms the exceptional qualities of his voice. To this a delay resembling a slap-back echo, an effect associated with the pioneers of rock 'n' roll, is applied. This is presumably a deliberate nod to the early rock 'n' rollers. After all, it should not be forgotten that in his youth Robert Plant was an Elvis Presley devotee and spent hours in front of his bedroom mirror imitating the King. And so too was Jimmy Page, who had his ear permanently glued to the wireless to soak up all the new music coming from the other side of the Atlantic. "The record that made me want to play guitar was 'Baby, Let's Play House' by Elvis Presley,"[18] he explains. With "Rock and Roll," then, Page too is paying tribute to his first loves, developing a riff that sits at the crossroads of hard rock and rockabilly. Page would later explain that after improvising with Bonham and listening to the twelve bars the two of them had been playing, the group took just fifteen minutes to work out the structure of the entire song. "It was enough to know that there was enough of a number there to keep working on it. Robert even came in singing on it

LITTLE
RICHARD

Little Richard and his musicians in the movie *Mister Rock and Roll* (c. 1957). "Rock and Roll" and "Keep A Knockin'" have much in common!

straight away."[37] Page double-tracks his riff, which he delivers on his Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One," and positions it more or less in stereo. A third guitar, colored by very strong reverb, comes in during the intro and between the verses with counterpoint chords, its sound distorted, possibly by means of the Tone Bender. At the end of the second verse this same guitar plays licks that are answered to good effect by a fourth guitar (listen from 1:30). Then comes the solo. This starts somewhat muddily (between 1:46 and 1:54) but Page soon achieves liftoff with his Les Paul, literally setting the track on fire. Some sections are doubled, presumably by a second take positioned in stereo, but only here and there (1:58, 2:07, and 2:13).

In the third and last verse, the orchestration is completed by Ian Stewart's piano. In all likelihood this was the sixth Stone's personal upright instrument, which he had brought with him inside the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. He provides a highly idiomatic accompaniment that is perfect for boogie. "John Paul Jones usually played keyboards for us," says Page, "but he had no problem letting Stu play piano on 'Rock and Roll.' When you have the chance to use a master at a specific style, you just step back and enjoy what comes out."[9] Finally, the task of bringing the track to a close falls to Bonham, who accomplishes this with a short drum solo. Although this solo would only assume its full proportions onstage, it nevertheless provides another demonstration of his talent as an exceptional drummer.

In "Rock and Roll," Led Zeppelin revisits the roots of rock music, bringing to bear a phenomenal vitality and power. This track is a veritable ode to joy. In the words of another band, *It's only rock 'n' roll but I like it…*

THE BATTLE OF EVERMORE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:38

COVERS

Fairport Convention performed a wonderful version of "The Battle of Evermore" with Robert Plant and Kristina Donahue at Fairport's Cropredy Convention on August 9, 2008. That same year, the former Led Zeppelin singer performed the song during his tour with Alison Krauss.

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: mandolin, acoustic guitar
John Paul Jones: mandolin (?), acoustic guitar (?)
Sandy Denny: vocals
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: February 1971 (Studio Two)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Led Zeppelin performed "The Battle of Evermore" rarely onstage, for the first time in Dallas in April 1977, and for the last time in Oakland on July 24, 1977—with John Paul Jones singing Sandy Denny's part. When Jimmy Page and Robert Plant performed the song on *No Quarter* many years later (1994), the female vocalist's part was sung by the British singer of Indian ancestry Najma Akhtar.

Genesis

"The Battle of Evermore" is another song composed more or less on the spot and then recorded in the bucolic atmosphere of Headley Grange. According to Andy Johns, the four members of Led Zeppelin were assembled around the fireplace of the old manor house enjoying a cup of tea. Jimmy Page picked up the mandolin that John Paul Jones had put down next to him and started to play a few chords. "I had never played one before, the tuning is totally different," says the Led Zeppelin guitarist. "It was my first experiment with a mandolin."[60] He continues: "Possibly, afterwards, it sounded like a dance-around-the maypole number, I must admit, but it wasn't purposely like that—'Let's do a folksy number.' There was something about that period. It was a time of great inspiration, you know."[4]

Robert Plant wrote the "heroic" lyrics of "The Battle of Evermore" after reading a fascinating book about Scottish history. Therefore, it was the wars of independence that bathed the British Isles in blood during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that provided the Led Zeppelin singer with his spark of inspiration. But they were apparently not his only influence. European legend, and more specifically the Celtic mythology exalted by Tolkien in his epic *The Lord of the Rings* also seem to have guided Plant in his lyric writing once again (after "Ramble On"). The Welsh composer Donald Swann, who had himself set poems from *The Lord of the Rings* to music (*The Road Goes Ever On*, 1967), has said that "The Battle of Evermore" "is the best example of a contemporary song based on Tolkien's work I've heard."[60] It is certainly not difficult to draw parallels between the Led Zeppelin song and the bible of fantasy writing. "The Battle of Evermore" clearly transposes the Battle of the Pelennor Fields in *The Return of the King* (the third volume in Tolkien's saga), in which the troops of Gondor and its allies are lined up against those of Sauron, the Dark Lord. The latter even gets a mention:

John Bonham, Robert Plant, and Jimmy Page with Fairport Convention's unforgettable vocalist Sandy Denny.

The Dark Lord rides in force tonight. This would make the *Queen of Light*, who *took her bow, and then* [...] *turned to go*, Éowyn, the niece of Théoden (king of the Rohirrim), who, during the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, kills the Witch-king of Angmar, Sauron's right arm. Meanwhile the *Prince of Peace* who *embraced the gloom and walked the night alone* must be Aragorn, the last heir to the thrones of Arnor and Gondor, and a friend of Gandalf and the elves. The final, and even more explicit, reference to *The Lord of the Rings* is: *The Ringwraiths ride in black*, in other words the "Dark Riders" (or Nazgûl) who have been corrupted by wearing the Rings of Power given to them by Sauron.

Going beyond these references to the world of Tolkien, "The Battle of Evermore" can also be read as an allegory of the secular struggle between good and evil:

"The Battle of Evermore" was the first time Robert Plant had ever collaborated with a female vocalist. Years later, he would relive the experience with Alison Krauss. Their album *Raising Sand* (2007) went on to win five Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year (2009).

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The Melody Maker Pop Poll Awards were held annually to honor the best of the year's musicians and performers. At the Savoy Hotel in London on September 16, 1970, the Beatles were unthroned as most popular group for the first time in eight years. The band that displaced them was Led Zeppelin. Robert Plant was voted best male singer and Sandy Denny best female singer.

The war is the common cry, pick up your swords and fly/The sky is filled with Good and Bad that mortals never know, sings Robert Plant.

On another level, this song marks a first (and only!) in the history of the group with the participation of Sandy Denny, a friend of Robert Plant who had just left Fairport Convention to form the group Fotheringay. "The Battle of Evermore" "was really more of a playlet rather than a song," explains Plant, "and after I wrote the lyrics, I realized I needed a completely different voice as well as my own."[60] And the Led Zeppelin singer adds: "While I sang about the events of the song, Sandy answered back as if she was the pulse of the people in the battlements. Sandy was the town crier, urging the people to lay down their weapons."[60] Jimmy Page offers a fair assessment: "Robert had this idea to bring in Sandy Denny. I thought it worked out well."[60] It is interesting to note that she would be the one and only female vocalist to take part in a Led Zeppelin recording.

Production

Although according to Andy Johns's account the song was written by the fireside at Headley Grange as the four members of Led Zeppelin were drinking tea, Jimmy Page has a very different memory: "I forget whether people had gone to bed early or what, but it just came out then."[21] In another interview he says he wrote "The Battle of Evermore" in the presence of Robert Plant and "just wrote up the chords and the whole thing in one sitting."[37] He adds: "Well, it sounded like an old English instrumental first off. Then it became a vocal and Robert did his bit."[37]

Whichever version is correct, Andy Johns set up a mic to capture the C. F. Martin A-style mandolin, an instrument much used on *Led Zeppelin III* and that Page plays here. The only difference is that Johns adds echo using the guitarist's Binson Echorec 2. This tape echo unit manufactured in Italy was used mainly during the late sixties and the seventies, particularly by groups like Pink Floyd, who immortalized the device on tracks such as "Astronomy Domine" and "Echoes."

There are three mandolin parts in the intro to "The Battle of Evermore." The arpeggiated first part, the dominant one, is faded in. "I did it more or less straight off," says Jimmy Page. "But, you see, that's fingerpicking again, going back to the studio days and developing a certain amount of technique—at least enough to be adapted and used. My fingerpicking is a sort of cross between Pete Seeger, Earl Scruggs, and total incompetence."[18]

A second mandolin part, again arpeggiated, but in a lower register, answers the first. The third part picks out the bass notes in order to emphasize the harmonies. The whole thing is subject to very present echo, perhaps even too present, as it tends to noticeably muddy the timing. It seems that Jimmy Page is the only one to play the

John Paul Jones and Robert Plant onstage for a performance of "The Battle of Evermore."

mandolin, as neither John Paul Jones nor John Bonham took part in the recording. Around 0:28, Page plays rhythm chords in two of the mandolin parts, lending them a slight flavor of the Andes. "I suppose all mandolin players would have a great laugh, 'cos it must be the standard thing to play those chords, you know, but possibly not that approach."[21] And when Robert Plant makes his vocal entry (0:35), Page adds a strummed acoustic guitar part on his Harmony Sovereign, providing the ensemble with a solid foundation. (Although John Paul Jones played the guitar on this track in concert, he seems not to have done so in the studio.)

Two Voices in Harmony

Robert Plant is truly at ease in folk songs of this kind. His voice acquires a warmer timbre than usual, revealing his fondness for this musical idiom. As soon as he had recorded his lead vocal at Headley Grange (using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio), a session was booked at Island Studios in London so that Sandy Denny could record her part. "I don't think it took more than 45 minutes,"[47] recalls Plant. It therefore seems likely that just one take was needed. The voice of the former Fairport Convention singer is superb, and her interjections balance Plant's perfectly. The timbres of the two singers match one another nicely, and their harmonizations also work well, as Plant acknowledges: "I showed her how to do the long 'Oooooh, dance in the dark' so there'd be a vocal tail-in. It was perfect against my bluesy thing."[47] It is mainly toward the end of the song that Plant goes off into his—indeed bluesy, and powerful—vocal improvisations, his voice colored by generous, deep reverb (from 3:52). The end result is a triumph. The combination of acoustic instruments and the two voices makes clear the folk-rock influence on the group, an influence that first became apparent on the previous album, the wonderful *Led Zeppelin III*. "If it suffered from a naivety and tweeness—I was only 23—it makes up for it in the cohesion of the voices and the playing. [47]

After "Black Dog" and "Rock and Roll," "The Battle of Evermore" comes as a breath of fresh folk air and forms an effective prelude to the exceptional "Stairway to Heaven," a Led Zeppelin masterpiece that would constitute a perfect synthesis of the electric and the acoustic.

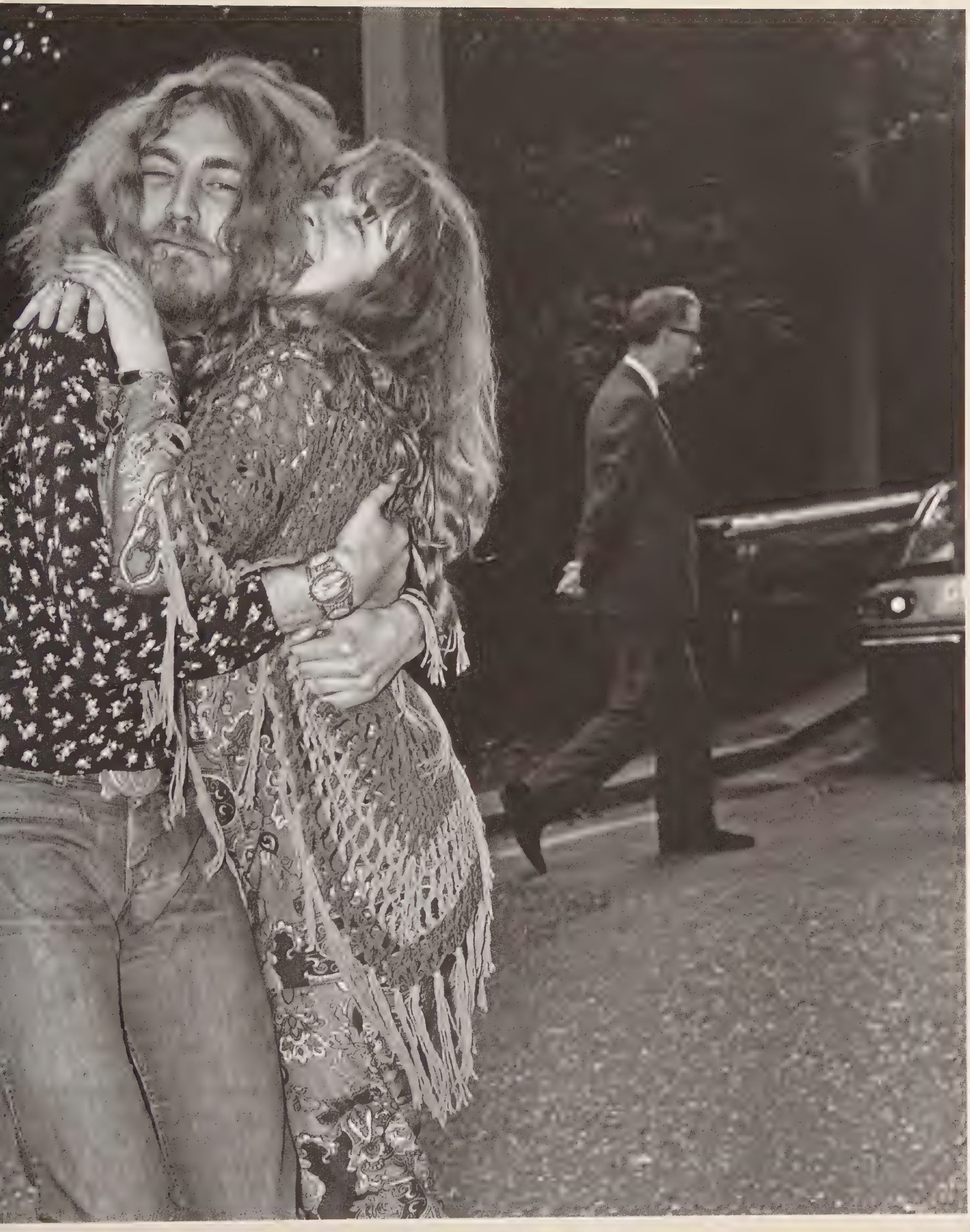
Sandy Denny had just quit Fairport Convention when she recorded "The Battle of Evermore" with Led Zeppelin. She and Robert Plant were already good friends.

SANDY DENNY

Born in London in 1947, Sandy Denny studied classical music as a child before starting to appear on the folk-club circuit. Following a promising studio debut (*Alex Campbell and His Friends*, 1967), she joined the Strawbs, recording *All Our Own Work* (1967, not released until 1973) with them. This album includes her composition "Who Knows Where the Time Goes" which would later be covered by Judy Collins and others.

Sandy Denny's career took off properly in 1968, when she succeeded Judy Dyble in Fairport Convention. Three remarkable albums followed, all released in 1969: *What We Did on Our Holidays*, *Unhalfbricking*, and *Liege & Lief*, bringing Sandy Denny acclaim as the most beautiful voice in folk rock.

She then threw herself into her own songwriting and formed the group Fotheringay with her future husband (and former Fairport Convention member) Trevor Lucas. *Fotheringay* (1970) and *Fotheringay 2* (recorded in 1970 but released in 2008) were also hailed as real triumphs of the genre. In 1971 the singer released her first solo album, *The North Star Grassman and the Ravens*. After her collaboration with Led Zeppelin, *Sandy* (1972), *Like an Old Fashioned Waltz* (1974), and *Rendezvous* (1977) followed. Sandy Denny suffered a bad fall and died of a brain hemorrhage in Wimbledon on April 21, 1978.



Robert Plant onstage at Wembley in November 1971, by which time "Stairway to Heaven" had already become a climax of the band's shows.

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 7:55

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six-string and twelve-string), electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, electric piano, recorders
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: December 1970, February 1971 (Studio One)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Digs (?) (Island)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

Genesis

The story of Led Zeppelin's most famous song—and a seminal work in the history of rock music—begins in spring 1970, when Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, following the quartet's fifth American tour, went in search of a new lease of creative energy in the mountainous landscapes of Wales. Many observers therefore see the harmonious arpeggios of the intro, which were recorded on a modest cassette player at Bron-Yr-Aur cottage, as imbued with the pastoral spirit of Snowdonia. As early as April 1970, a cautious Jimmy Page explained to the *NME*: "I don't want to tell you about it in case it doesn't come off. It's an idea for a really long track on the next album…we want to try something new with the organ and acoustic guitar building up and building up to the electric thing."[70] The aim back then was to create an epic fifteen-minute track that would be emblematic of the group and would replace "Dazed and Confused" onstage.

A few months later, back at his Pangbourne house, Jimmy Page reworked what would eventually become "Stairway to Heaven." Playing his six- and twelve-string guitars, the ideas flowed and he recorded various chord sequences in his eight-track studio using the New Vista from Pye Records. "I'd been fooling around with the acoustic guitar and came up with the different sections, which I married together,"[47] he explains. An initial version was recorded at Island Studios in December 1970, but this was instrumental and did not yet have its definitive structure. It was not until Headley Grange in January 1971 that "Stairway to Heaven" would develop from advanced sketch stage into an out-and-out masterpiece.

One evening when John Paul Jones and John Bonham had gone to Speakeasy in London, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant tossed around various ideas. "I was holding a pencil and paper and for some reason I was in a very bad mood," recalls the Led Zeppelin singer. "Then all of a sudden, my hand is writing the words 'There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold…' I sat there,

looked at the words and almost leaped out from my seat."[47] The continuation of the words came straightaway, logically, the fruit of a fertile and complex imagination that draws simultaneously on history, mythology, religion, and philosophy. From that day on, Jimmy Page was convinced more than ever by the writing talent of Robert Plant: "I knew at that point that he'd proved it to himself and could get into something a bit more profound than just subjective things [...] but there's a lot of ambiguity implied in that number that wasn't present before."[37] And no doubt it was with considerable relief that Page realized all he had to do now was focus on the music.

Analysis

How are we to interpret "Stairway to Heaven"? While there are almost as many interpretations as there are Led Zeppelin commentators, they are all united by a common thread: this epic poem written in front of the hearth at Headley Grange is a kind of initiatory journey. The

"Stairway to Heaven" may be Led Zeppelin's towering masterpiece. It is also an occasion for guitar heroics from Jimmy Page—especially live, on his double-neck Gibson.

heroine who believes that *all that glitters is gold* initially comes across as the epitome of materialism: she is utterly self-assured, and so well-off that she can buy herself whatever her heart desires, even a *stairway to heaven*. This is reminiscent of the sale of indulgences in the Roman Catholic Church of times gone by—obtaining the remission of one's sins and a place in heaven by giving gifts or performing an act of piety. Little by little, however, any such certainties become blurred. In the second verse, the lady sees *a sign on the wall*. What does this sign say? she wonders, because *sometimes words have two meanings* and *sometimes all of our thoughts are misgiven*. In other words, there can never be any absolute truth.

The third verse is even more mystical. *There's a feeling I get when I look to the west*. Could Robert Plant be alluding to an episode in the Bible in which Cain, after killing his brother Abel out of jealousy, flees east of the earthly paradise of Eden? If so, the *rings of smoke* would be the symbol if not of remorse, then at least of the resulting mental confusion and anxiety. In the fourth verse, Robert Plant presents a piper *who will lead us to reason*. Here, too, there are several possible interpretations. Is this Lucifer, as some have suggested? Is it that victim of man's ingratitude the Pied Piper of Hamelin, from the legend retold by the brothers Grimm? Is it the Piper at the Gates of Dawn from Kenneth Grahame's novel *The Wind in the Willows*, and at the same time an allusion to Pink Floyd, who named their first album (1967) after this figure? Or is it a metaphor for the gentle melody that plays just before the gates of paradise open? However, this melody is yet to be heard because in the fifth verse, there are two alternative paths the heroine of the song can take: the right one or the wrong one. She therefore faces a classic moral dilemma. Yesterday she was so sure of herself, but today, apparently in the twilight of her earthly existence, she is prey to dark thoughts. Before her (and not simply the shadow of herself!) there appears a female figure who is her exact opposite, one *who shines white light* and knows *how everything still turns to gold*.

Dotted with biblical references, "Stairway to Heaven" also draws on the ancient European myths as analyzed by various historians of whom Robert Plant was an eager reader. Among the authors that may have influenced him in writing this song, one worthy of special mention is the Scottish poet, occultist, and politician Lewis Spence, who wrote some forty books on lost civilizations, esotericism, John Bonham displays enormous feeling in "Stairway to Heaven," possibly one of his most dazzling performances.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Other than in the Philippines, "Stairway to Heaven" has never been officially released as a single. The song has therefore never entered the charts—which is astonishing given its status as one of the everlasting anthems of rock music. This changed on November 13, 2007, when it became possible to download the Led Zeppelin catalog, as a result of which "Stairway to Heaven" belatedly achieved number one on the charts!

mythology, and the Celtic world (not least *The Magic Arts in Celtic Britain*, first published in 1945). As not infrequently throughout the course of this album, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* also casts its shadow over Plant. Just as the line *In my thoughts I have seen rings of smoke through the trees* clearly refers to the smoke rings blown by Gandalf, the woman in the last verse could be the elf Galadriel, daughter of Finarfin and wife of Celeborn, with whom she lives in the forest of Lothlórien. The final, extraordinary analogy is with the cult of Mithra, believed to have developed in Persia two centuries before Christ, which has seven levels of initiation just as "Stairway to Heaven" has seven verses.

Controversies

Led Zeppelin performed "Stairway to Heaven" for the first time in concert on March 5, 1971, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, against a backdrop of civil war between Catholics and Protestants. However, the song would strike some observers, particularly on the US side of the Atlantic, not as a message of peace and harmony—a "wedding song,"[10] as Robert Plant would ironically put it—but as the work of the devil. In 1982, a couple of years after Led Zeppelin disbanded, a number of Baptist preachers in the southern United States sought to instigate a new inquisition, this time targeting the world of rock music and Led Zeppelin in particular (presumably because of Jimmy Page's acquisition of Aleister Crowley's house in Scotland and his interest in the occult). One of these preachers, Jacob Aranza, a pastor from Louisiana, claimed in his indictment *Backward Masking Unmasked: Backward Satanic Messages of Rock and Roll Exposed* that by playing "Stairway to Heaven" backward, subliminal messages of devotion to the devil can be heard. According to Aranza and various other impassioned souls, *If there's a bustle in your hedgerow, don't be alarmed now, it's just a spring clean for the May-queen. Yes, there are two paths you can go by, but in the long run there's still time to change the road you're on* yields nothing other than "Here's to my sweet Satan. The one whose little path would make me sad, whose power is Satan. He'll give you 666, there was a little toolshed where he made us suffer, sad Satan." Also in 1982, the Committee on Consumer Protection and Toxic Materials of the California State Assembly held a hearing in which it was proposed that the public at large, and in particular young adolescents who might be easily influenced, should be alerted to the satanic nature of songs not only by Led Zeppelin, but also by the Beatles and the Electric Light Orchestra.

To these accusations, which would have raised a smile had they not been a reminder of the darkest days of McCarthyism, Jimmy Page responded: "They're listening to all the lyrics, they could find one that sounds like something in reverse. The whole situation's a joke. It's stupid people. They try to advertise the fact that they've found some great key to something. They wouldn't understand the key if they even heard it in the first place. Those records were extremely emotional and if that's the way they interpret it, if that deep intense emotion was satanic, then they've got no idea what we were about."[60]

Since then, the public has received Robert Plant and Jimmy Page's message loud and clear. Today, "Stairway to Heaven" is number one on *Classic Rock* magazine's list of "Ten of the Best Songs Ever!" and number thirty-one on *Rolling Stone*'s list of "500 Greatest Songs of All Time." Most significantly, it has been aired on US radio more than any other song. It has been claimed in *Monday Morning* magazine that at the end of the nineties, the Led Zeppelin song had been programmed more

than four thousand times per year on the sixty-seven most important album-oriented rock (AOR) stations. Even more impressively, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) estimates that since the release of *Led Zeppelin IV*, "Stairway to Heaven" has been played for around twenty-three million minutes of airtime, or just under forty-four years!

Production

"I had said to Jimmy that we needed a song that builds up and hadn't been having much luck. But then he said: 'I think I've got something that you'll like and we'll do it next week.' And he came in with 'Stairway to Heaven.'"[64] This, then, is how Andy Johns discovered the Led Zeppelin masterpiece, probably at one of the sessions at Island Studios in London in December 1970. After a number of unfruitful attempts, work resumed at Headley Grange, using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, in January 1971. Page was still looking for a definitive structure for the song. Once he was satisfied, he played it to John Paul Jones so that the bassist could absorb it and contribute his ideas. Jones has explained that he first came across the piece when Page, having returned with Plant from Bron-Yr-Aur, played it to him on an acoustic guitar in front of a wood fire. He then picked up his bass recorder for the intro and switched to the piano for the verses. "I do have the original tape that was running at the time we ran down 'Stairway to Heaven' completely with the band," recalls Page. "I'd worked it all out already the night before with John Paul Jones, written down the changes and things."[37] The next day, they worked on the piece as a trio, with Bonham on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" kit, Jones on bass, and Page on acoustic. The timing worked out smoothly except for one place, where Bonzo had trouble with the rhythmic motif that launches the guitar solo. "Other than that, it flowed very quickly,"[37] continues the guitarist. While they were rehearsing, Robert Plant had sat down in a corner of the room and was working on the lyrics, which he had sketched out sometime before. "He must have written three quarters of the lyrics on the spot. He didn't have to go away and think about them. Amazing, really."[37]

Jimmy Page's intention was to construct a song with a drum part that does not begin until the middle, before building "to a huge crescendo."[9] He also envisaged gradually stepping up the tempo, "which is something musicians

Opposite: It was on his Dragon Telecaster (being played here in 1969) that Jimmy Page created the immortal guitar solo on "Stairway."

Following spread: Led Zeppelin in concert, with Jimmy Page playing his famous Gibson EDS-1275.

aren't supposed to do."[9] In the end, the guitarist felt he needed a more suitable environment in which to record the track: "We really couldn't have done the acoustic guitar and drums at Headley; we needed a nice big studio. It's as simple as that."[9]

Created at Headley Grange, "Stairway to Heaven" was then immortalized at Island Studios in February 1971. Accompanied by Andy Johns, the group resumed sessions in the vast space of Studio One on the first floor of the building. First of all they recorded the backing track with Page on acoustic, Jones on electric piano, and Bonham on drums. Then they added the various overdubs: six- and twelve-string guitars, bass, guitar solo, and vocals.

"Stairway to Heaven" Section by Section

The Intro

Jimmy Page opens the track on his faithful Harmony Sovereign H1260 acoustic, with a wonderful arpeggiated descending chromatic scale that would earn him an accusation of plagiarism in 2014. The guitar is positioned on the left of the stereo image, with deep, sublime reverb from an EMT 140 plate answering on the right. The style is clearly folk, very British, and inevitably influenced by guitarists such as Bert Jansch. At the end of the first four bars, a bass recorder makes its entry (at 0:10). In the following bar it is joined by two more recorder parts (soprano and tenor), also played by John Paul Jones, which fill in the harmony. Originally, Page had wanted a keyboard, but Jones was right to hold out for this delicate and medieval-sounding pastoral color.

The Verses

Robert Plant sings the first verses of "Stairway to Heaven" in a gentle and expressive voice. His interpretation is tinged with fragility and nostalgia, and intensified by a slight reverb. Initially, throughout the first two verses, Jones accompanies Plant on bass recorder alone before resuming his three-part harmonization from 1:47. Page, meanwhile, continues to play arpeggios on his Harmony Sovereign before adding a rhythm part on his 1965 Fender Electric XII Sunburst at the end of the second verse (2:13, right-hand channel). This guitar sound is one of Andy Johns's successes: "I didn't have a lot to do with 'Stairway' except for the 12-string guitar sound that I really liked at the time."[64] Page's Fender is plugged into the console via a direct box. Johns continues, "If you do it direct and compress it, you get a much more bell-like quality. So I suggested we try that and he really liked it."[64] In addition to the bass, there is another instrument that makes its entry at the same time: the Hohner Electrapiano, also played by John Paul Jones. "I'd never even seen one before or since,"[64] says Andy Johns. The sound harmonizes perfectly with the two guitars while at the same time contributing a wonderful sense of space. Johns would explain that he tried to further bring out the right-hand part in order to give the instrument more presence.

In the third verse, Page doubles his acoustic arpeggios on the Fender Electric XII. And after the fourth verse (from 3:03), he plays a riff on his Les Paul "Number One." The descending harmonic structure recalls the last part of the Beatles' "You Never Give Me Your Money" (at 2:48, on *Abbey Road*, 1969) or the bridge of "Badge" by Cream (at 1:07, on *Goodbye*, 1969). From this point on the tempo starts to speed up perceptibly, just as the guitarist-composer envisaged.

The next verse is identical to the previous one, with the three recorder parts coming back in at 3:30. It is not until the fifth verse, in other words the very middle of the song, that the extraordinary John Bonham surges in on drums. He is supported by John Paul Jones on his 1962 Fender Jazz Bass, and the effect is electrifying. Bonham's swing is an object lesson in pure feeling. At this stage, the track is still "only" a mid-tempo folk-rock ballad, but Bonham's genius is to impart a remarkable groove to the

John Paul Jones, the multi-instrumentalist on "Stairway to Heaven," on which he plays bass, electric piano, and recorders.

COVERS

"Stairway to Heaven" has been covered a great many times. Among the most original versions are those by Frank Zappa (*The Best Band You Never Heard in Your Life*, 1991), Dolly Parton (*Halos & Horns*, 2002), and Mary J. Blige (single, 2010).

track that blends jazz with Tamla Motown. Although his attack is heavy, his Ludwig kit as a whole seems lighter than air; of course it should also be pointed out that he benefits from terrific rhythmic support from Jones's bass and Page's guitars. This is perhaps one of the best drum parts Bonham ever recorded.

The next two verses provide Robert Plant with an opportunity to vary his vocal timbre by adopting a more bluesy voice than before. The tempo is also quicker, having sped up from 72 bpm at the beginning to 86 bpm here.

The Solo

The guitar solo is announced by a syncopated rhythmic motif, the passage that gave Bonham a bit of a headache (5:35). The various guitars ring out, drenched in reverb, Page playing his Fender XII, which he doubles (or even triples?), and also probably his Les Paul. The effect of the compression is particularly noticeable here, emphasizing the bell-like quality of the guitars. Moreover the accumulation of guitars provides a color reminiscent of that achieved by Pete Townshend.

Finally, after a few bars, Jimmy Page launches into his solo (5:55), probably one of the most successful of his career. It took a considerable amount of time and energy to get right, however. "There was a bit of a struggle on the solo," remembers Andy Johns. "He was playing for half an hour and did seven or eight takes. He hadn't quite got it sussed. I was starting to get a bit paranoid and he said, 'No, no you're making ME paranoid.' Then right after that he played a really great solo."[64] But there is another account of how this solo was recorded that contradicts that of Andy Johns. Phill Brown, who was a sound engineer (or assistant sound engineer?) at Island Studios at this time, recalls getting the solo down himself in Studio Two: "We worked on lead guitar parts to 'Stairway to Heaven' endlessly, trying out different styles, sounds and effects."[66] Experimenting with numerous ways of coloring the guitar sound, including playing through a Leslie speaker and saturating the console, took several days, according to Brown, who concludes critically: "Listening to the final version of 'Stairway to Heaven,' it's hard to imagine how bad some of the playing and tuning was. There were many loose timing mistakes and wrong notes from Page, and the control room atmosphere remained intense."[66]

Whichever account is correct, the fact remains that Jimmy Page's performance is a real achievement, and would be known as one of the greatest guitar solos in the history of rock. To get there, the guitarist needed to channel his inspiration through various musical waymarkers. He explains, "I had the first phrase worked out, and a link phrase here and there, but on the whole that solo was improvised. I think I played it through a Marshall."[9] On the last point Page is mistaken! He was actually plugged into the old Supro combo he had used on the group's first album. Similarly, he was playing his famous Dragon Telecaster: "The 'Stairway to Heaven' solo was done when I pulled out the Telecaster, which I hadn't used for a long time," he tells Steve Rosen in 1977. He "plugged it into the Supro, and away it went again. That's a different sound entirely from the rest of the first album. It was a good, versatile setup."[18] The sound does indeed differ from that of the guitars on *Led Zeppelin I*. It is far warmer, with distortion produced by the amp rather than by a Tone Bender. What to say of the solo itself, other than that it is a model of everything every rock guitarist dreams of: lyricism, panache, technique, edge, and above all feeling, an abundance of emotion. Jimmy Page is a truly inspired musician, and it is not difficult to imagine that on "Stairway to Heaven," part of his magic, an eternal, immortal quality, was instilled in him by some kind of muse. It is also important to underline the extraordinary rhythm section, John Paul Jones and John Bonham forming an utterly

Randy California of the band Spirit. The representatives of the composer of "Taurus" would later sue Jimmy Page for plagiarism.

One more proof of Led Zeppelin's international popularity: a dog lover in France named her Old English sheepdog breeding kennel "Stairway to Heaven."

magnificent and masterful unit. These two musicians provide Page with the perfect support, the supreme groove. Finally, toward the end of the solo (from 6:25), the guitarist adds two slide phrases that are doubled and positioned in stereo, forming an effective countermelody to the lead guitar. By this point the tempo has increased to 100 bpm.

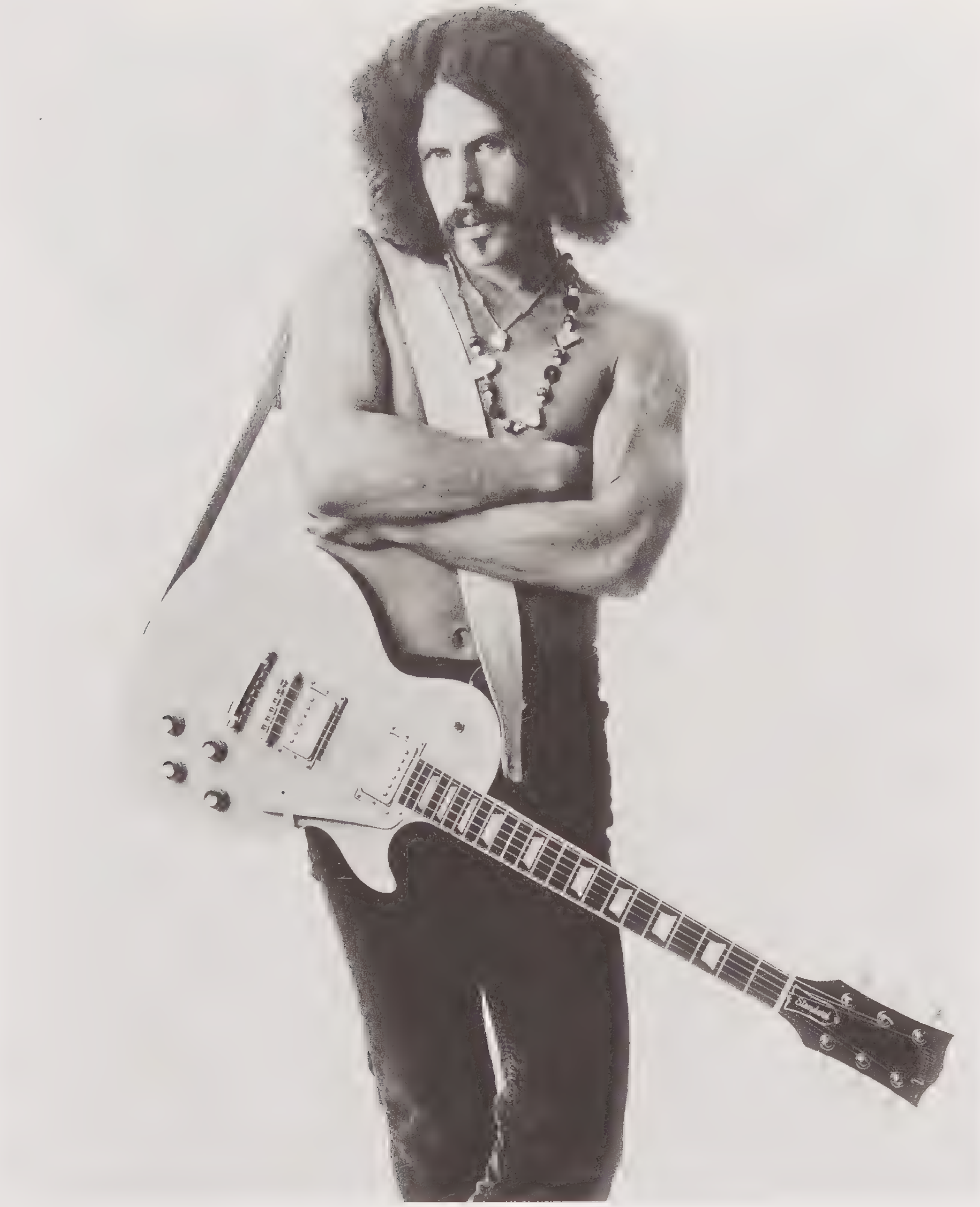
The Final Section

As the guitar solo comes to an end, Robert Plant resumes his vocal (from 6:44) in his characteristic high and powerful voice. The style is high-octane rock, and following his bandmates' cue, he delivers a truly classic performance. He is supported by an impressively efficient Jones-Bonham rhythm duo, which is accompanied in turn by Page with some superb rhythm guitar parts, both strummed and palm mute, on his Fender XII (very likely complemented by his VOX Phantom XII) and his Gibson Les Paul. As the track draws to its close he places a riff colored by deep reverb behind Plant's vocal (around 7:00). The singer ends the last verse with a sustained and thoroughly moving note that Page prolongs with a melodic line on his Telecaster (doubled) that seems to degenerate into a moan with the final rallentando. It is Robert Plant who then has the honor of ending "Stairway to Heaven" a cappella, his voice filled with emotion that is intensified by a short reverb.

There can be little doubt that this exceptional track is one of Led Zeppelin's masterpieces. This is a view shared by Jimmy Page but not Robert Plant, who instead sees "Kashmir" (on *Physical Graffiti*, 1975) as the pinnacle of the group's achievement, and other than on a few rare occasions (notably on Japanese television in 1994, in an acoustic version with Page), refused to perform the song after the breakup of the band, forcing the guitarist to rearrange it as an instrumental for the concert stage. But it is Jimmy Page who best sums up what the vast majority of the public felt upon hearing this masterpiece: "To me, I thought 'Stairway' crystallized the essence of the band. It had everything there and showed the band at its best…as a band, as a unit […]. It was a milestone for us. Every musician wants to do something of lasting quality, something which will hold up for a long time and I guess we did it with 'Stairway.'"[71]

Plagiarized by Page?

In May 2014, a complaint of plagiary was filed against Led Zeppelin. The Randy Craig Wolfe Trust, representing Randy California, a guitarist, singer, and songwriter with the Californian group Spirit, who died in 1997 while saving his son from drowning in Hawaii, accused Jimmy Page of plagiarizing "Taurus," one of the tracks on the group's first album, *Spirit*, released in January 1968. A year before his death, California had already expressed his bitterness upon listening to "Stairway to Heaven": "The guys made millions of bucks on it and never said, 'Thank you,' never said, 'Can we pay you some money for it?' […] It's kind of a sore point with me. Maybe someday their conscience will make them do something about it. I don't know. There are funny business dealings between record companies, managers, publishers and artists. But when artists do it to other artists, there's no excuse for that. I'm mad!"[72] It is certainly true that the descending chromatic motif that Jimmy Page plays in the intro and first four verses of "Stairway to Heaven" bears a strong resemblance to Randy California's. And Spirit was a group that Robert Plant liked. The two bands had even shared the same billing at the end of 1968 and the start of 1969. Despite



the presence of the Californians' albums in his record collection, Page would claim he had never heard "Taurus" prior to the filing of the lawsuit.

In truth, the allegations made against the guitarist are debatable. The "Taurus" motif is a reasonably common chord progression that has been used in traditional and popular music since time immemorial. During the trial, lawyers and musicologists on either side battled it out on the basis of various musical examples. Francis Malofiy, the plaintiff's attorney, even went as far as to accuse Page of copying the famous "Chim Chim Cher-ee" from the movie *Mary Poppins* (1964)—to the great mirth of the Led Zeppelin guitarist. There was talk of a musical tradition going back to the seventeenth century and also of the Beatles' "Michelle," but overwhelming evidence was presented in the form of two specific songs that were played to the courtroom: the 1959 adaptation of Arthur Hamilton's "Cry Me a River" by the guitarist Davy Graham, which was used in a BBC documentary, and the song "To Catch a Shad," a traditional number recorded in 1963 by the Modern Folk Quartet. Each of these songs, recorded some considerable time before Spirit recorded "Taurus," feature the same descending chromatic scale, making it difficult to accuse Jimmy Page of plagiarizing Randy California. On June 23, 2016, the court duly found in Page's favor.

MISTY MOUNTAIN HOP

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones / 4:39

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, electric piano
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: February 1971 (Studio One)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

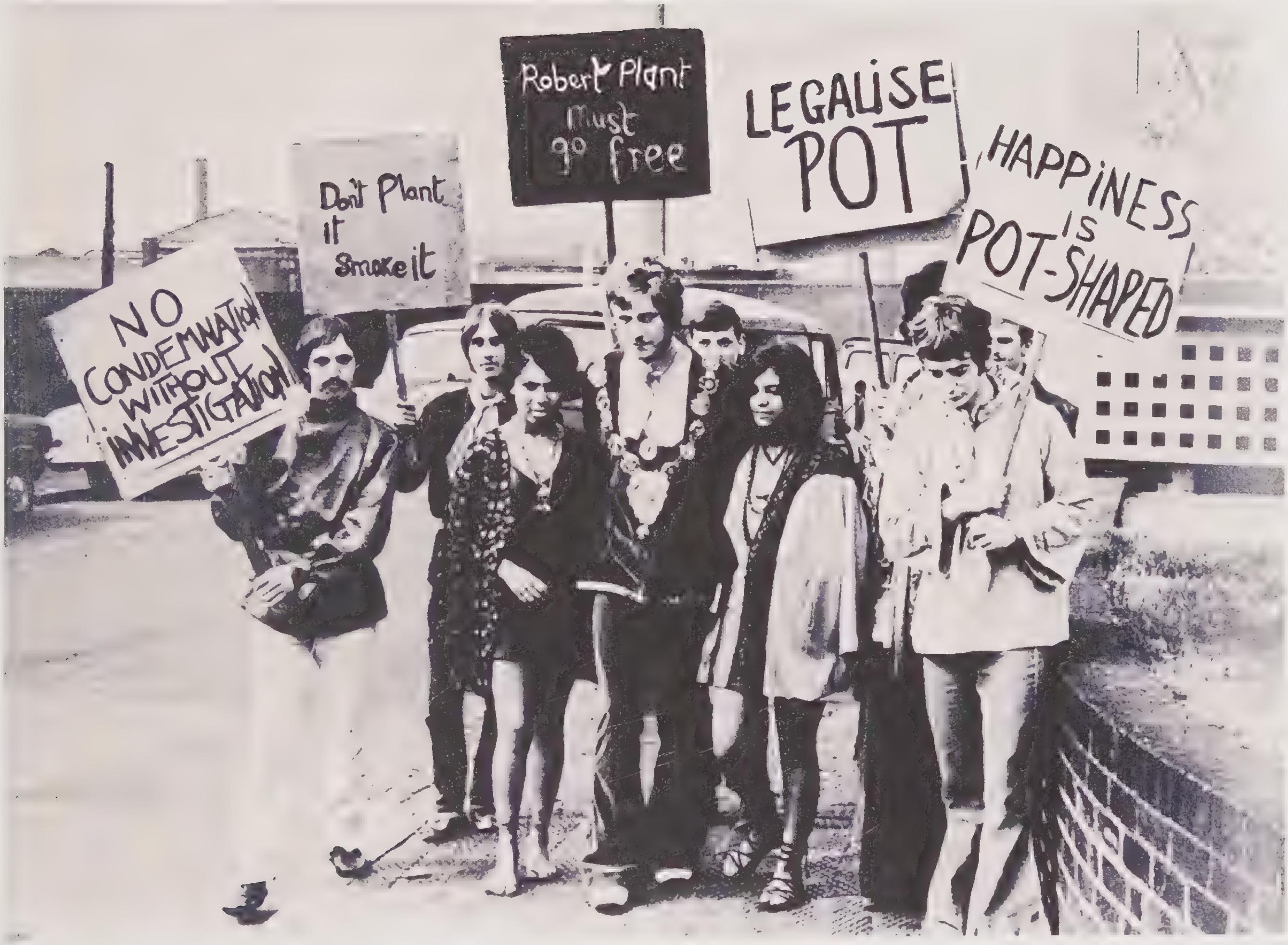
It seems probable that in Robert Plant's imagination, Tolkien's Misty Mountains were represented by the mountainous landscapes of Snowdonia. In an interview for *Rolling Stone* magazine, he claimed to like the "wet Welsh climate"[73] and "weather people run away from,"[73] hence the reference at the end of "Misty Mountain Hop." And of course the singer had set up home in Worcestershire, not so very far from Wales.

Genesis

This is another song on the *Four Symbols* album that refers explicitly to Tolkien—at least its title does. The Misty Mountains are mentioned for the first time in *The Hobbit* (1937), and again in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien was inspired to make the mountain range tower up out of Middle-earth by his reading of the Prose Edda (a poetry manual thought to have been written by the Icelander Snorri Sturluson at the beginning of the thirteenth century). In his saga they are located between Eriador (to the west) and the Anduin (to the east). In the Third Age, the Misty Mountains become the theater of a war lasting for several years between the dwarves and cruel Sauron's orcs.

However, the scenario of "Misty Mountain Hop" could not be further removed from the world of Tolkien. Plant said, "It's about a bunch of hippies getting busted… about the problems you can come across when you have a simple walk in the park on a nice sunny afternoon. In England it's understandable because wherever you go to enjoy yourself Big Brother is not far behind. Big Brother being the paranoiac establishment."[60]

The Led Zeppelin singer writes from his own experience (taking part in a protest march in the Midlands for the legalization of marijuana in 1968) when he refers to the hippie counterculture: *Crowds of people sitting on the grass with flowers in their hair.* The narrator, clearly Plant himself, is no mere spectator, but a protagonist too: *I didn't notice but it had got very dark and I was really, really out of my mind*, he sings at the beginning of the second verse. We are given to understand that marijuana or some other substance has started to take effect when the police suddenly appear. Later on he advises his girlfriend: *If you go down in the streets today, baby, you better open your eyes/The folk down there really don't care.* And so disillusioned is he that he decides to pack his bags, to abandon a society he has discovered is not for him.


NO CONDEMNATION WITHOUT INVESTIGATION
Don't Plant it Smoke it
Robert Plant must go free
LEGALISE POT
HAPPINESS IS POT-SHAPED

Robert Plant and members of Band of Joy demonstrating in favor of the legalization of marijuana in 1967.

Although the writer-narrator Robert Plant has adopted the flower power ideals to which the Western world awoke during the second half of the 1960s, there is something sad or even distressing about the realization he comes to here: that the dreams of a fair society based on love for one's fellow human beings have dissipated and that he prefers to set off for *the Misty Mountains where the spirits go now/Over the hills, where the spirits fly*.

"Misty Mountain Hop" was performed onstage for the first time in Copenhagen on May 3, 1971, and then regularly on the 1972 and 1973 tours. After the breakup of the group, Robert Plant performed the song on his solo tours, and subsequently with Jimmy Page at the tribute concert for Ahmet Ertegun on December 10, 2007. The song was released as the B-side of the single "Black Dog" in 1971.

Production

The first track on the second side of the original LP release, "Misty Mountain Hop" immediately grabs the listener's attention with a heady riff played by John Paul Jones on his Hohner Electra-piano. It seems that while the four members of Led Zeppelin were at Headley Grange, the pianist/bassist/recorder player/mandolin player/arranger/composer took advantage of a quiet moment to seek inspiration: "I got up before everyone else one morning and I was playing around on the electric piano. When the others got up I played it to them and it went from there."[74] In an interview within the context of a BBC documentary made in 1990, Jimmy Page would give a different account of how the song came into being: "I remember coming up with the opening part of that, and then we would go off into that. Jonesy put the chords in for the chorus bit and that would shape up."[75] Although their recollections differ, the two musicians are the co-composers of this number.

Jimmy Page would describe "Misty Mountain Hop" as having been realized on the spot at Headley Grange, and immediately recorded by Andy Johns using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. "We used to work pretty fast,"[75] he observes, and indeed a certain sense of urgency can be detected in the performance, a tension in perfect keeping with the spirit of the music. The song opens with two bars from John Paul Jones on the Electra-piano (on the left). Jimmy Page then doubles Jones's riff on his Gibson Les Paul (on the right). The two instruments have an edgy, rocky sound, the Gibson distorted and the Hohner not far off. John Bonham then makes a thunderous entrance in the fourth bar with an explosive and surprising drum fill. As usual, he lays down a magnificent groove, his drumming immediately setting an irresistible, locomotive-like pulse that is reinforced by Jones's solid Jazz Bass. The way Bonham's Ludwig "Green Sparkle" kit has been recorded is astonishing, lending it a "live" quality not unlike the drumming on "When the Levee Breaks" at the end of this album, even though the latter was captured under different conditions. Having said that, there is an astonishing diversity of drum color on each of the tracks on the album, with no two drum parts sounding the same. Despite this they are linked by a certain homogeneity due mainly to Bonham's extraordinary touch, but also to the talents of Andy Johns and Jimmy Page in their respective roles of engineer and producer.

Robert Plant harmonizes with himself from the opening line of the first verse, which serves to accentuate the strangeness of the melody. He delivers the second line without harmonization but with a distinctly rock timbre, powerful and high-pitched. The same goes for all the verses. In the refrains he triples his voice in unison (positioned in stereo) with a certain looseness in the synchronization (for example the *So I asked* at 0:51).

Jimmy Page harmonizes his riff after the third verse with a pair of tracks positioned on the left and right of the stereo image (from 2:39). He then launches into a highly melodic solo that he again harmonizes with two, and sometimes three, guitars. The solo ends in a hook that he repeats in a loop (from 3:04).

The track concludes with an outro launched by a (not quite impeccable!) snare drum roll from Bonham (at 3:56). Jimmy Page slightly varies the motif he plays on his Gibson, John Paul Jones adds a very good electric piano overdub (from 4:22), and Robert Plant closes the track with repeated *ooohs*, which seem to be lightly colored by either a chorus effect or a very rapid (Binson Echorec–style) echo, followed by the repeated phrase *I really don't know* drenched in reverb.

"Misty Mountain Hop" has the dubious honor of following the epic "Stairway to Heaven" on the album and brings a refreshing breath of vigorous rock energy.

Jimmy Page and Robert Plant onstage in 1998. The guitarist remains faithful to his Gibson Les Paul, which lights up the recording of "Misty Mountain Hop."

THE VERY TOPS?

On the fourth pressing of the album, an error slipped into the title of the song, turning "Misty Mountain Hop" into "Misty Mountain Top," an error that was corrected in the subsequent pressing. However, irony of ironies, it was repeated on the so-called green-and-orange-label versions at the end of the 1970s!

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At 2:37, Robert Plant can be heard singing *oh oh oh* in the distance, swamped in reverb (left-hand channel). This was probably a badly wiped track, but at the same time an effect deliberately left in the mix by Jimmy Page. Finally, at 3:48, Plant fails to end his doubling of his vocal in exactly the same way each time, resulting in a buildup of esses from the end of the word *mountains*.

"Four Sticks" was sheer torture for John Bonham. Led Zeppelin only gave one live performance of the song: in Copenhagen in May 1971.

FOUR STICKS

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:49

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar, electric guitars (six-string and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass, synthesizer
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: November 1970, February 1971 (Studio One)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: Tony (?) (Island)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

Genesis

"Four Sticks" is one of the compositions on the *Four Symbols* album that were worked on at Island Studios at the end of 1970 and then at Headley Grange at the beginning of 1971. After that it was set aside (in favor of "Rock and Roll") before being taken up again in February at Island Studios. Jimmy Page recalls that they tried "Four Sticks" "on numerous occasions and it didn't come off until the day Bonzo…who was just playing with two sticks on it…picked up two sets of sticks and we did it."[60] And clearly the track gets its title from John Bonham's use of four drumsticks, two in each hand.

The lyrics have no more than a tenuous connection with the title of the song. The narrator-protagonist seems to want to break up with his companion and go his own way. Is this a new stage in the initiatory journey that is Led Zeppelin's fourth album? Erik Davis, in his book devoted to the album, writes: "'Four Sticks' is the 'Walpurgis Night' of *IV*, the first indication that our hero's journey is a downward spiral; that he's no longer heading for heaven but for Styx."[76] Hence the reference to *when the owls cry in the night* and the painful observation that *the rainbow's end…it's just a den for those who…hide their loves to depths of lies*. The end of the song confirms that the journey is, in reality, a failure—as if the dream had degenerated little by little into a nightmare—as a result of determined opposition from other people: *They can't hold the wrath of those who walk…*

Due to its complexity, "Four Sticks" was performed by the four members of Led Zeppelin only once onstage, during a show in Copenhagen on May 3, 1971.

Production

"Four Sticks" is one of the songs on the album that was almost abandoned. Despite of multiple attempts by the group, it did not sound the way it did in the head of its composer, Jimmy Page. It did at least have the merit of giving rise to the spark that inspired the group to create

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

In 1972, during a trip to Bombay, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant recorded a second version of "Four Sticks" (and also "Friends") with local musicians. Far from convinced by the results, the two members of Led Zeppelin decided not to release the track on record before 2015. It can now be enjoyed on CD3 of the deluxe edition of *Coda* under the title "Four Hands."

"Rock and Roll" at John Bonham's instigation (see "Rock and Roll" page 250). Bonham would also eventually unblock the situation by playing with two pairs of drumsticks—sheer torture for the hands, a torture he had to endure for almost five minutes! "It was two takes," explains Jimmy Page, "but that was because it was physically impossible for him to do another."[47] It was actually on February 1, 1971, the evening before the recording, that the idea came to Bonham during a concert at the Lyceum Theatre in London in which Ginger Baker was pitted against Elvin Jones in a drumming duel. Inspired by what he heard, Bonzo was determined to create something capable of impressing Baker, one of his drumming touchstones. Thus he came up with this incredible tribal rhythm, using mainly his medium tom, his floor tom, his hi-hat, and his bass drum. He can also be heard hitting the rims of his drums. Page says, "We tried different ways of approaching it. The idea was to get an abstract feeling. We tried it a few times and it didn't come off until the day Bonzo had a Double Diamond beer, picked up two sets of sticks and went for it. It was magic."[74] The drum part would also cause Andy Johns something of a headache. "It was a bastard to mix," explains the engineer. "When I originally recorded the basic tracks, I compressed the drums. Then when I went to mix, I couldn't make it work. I did it five or six times."[47] As British music critic Barney Hoskyns observes, "It didn't help that a quarter-inch tape of the track was missing."[47]

The timing also presented John Paul Jones with some difficulties on bass. "I had real problems working out where the beat should go," he recalls. "Rhythmically, it was quite unusual, but I was the only one in the band who could do that because of my background as an arranger."[47] He doubles Page's riff on his Jazz Bass, but it is mainly in the choruses that he shows off his technique, delivering an extraordinary bass line, syncopated and melodic, that bears the stamp of an exceptionally gifted musician.

The Lure of the Orient

Meanwhile, Jimmy Page regards "Four Sticks" as one of his guitar milestones, particularly the central section: "The sounds of those guitars—that's where I'm going,"[18] he would later comment. It is true that the track abounds with six- and twelve-string guitar parts, contributing an incredible richness to the instrumental arrangement. The riff, first of all, starts in the first bar, supported by Bonham and Jones. The sound is distinctly rock, obtained by Page most probably on his 1959 Gibson Les Paul played through his Marshall 1959SLP. He seems to triple the part, placing a track on the left, in the center, and on the right. Unless, of course, his amp was recorded in stereo and he added a single mono overdub that is positioned in the center of the stereo field. Page uses standard tuning, and his motif has an Asian feel, which, incidentally, would encourage him to record a version played by Indian musicians (who were not completely at ease with the rhythm!) in Bombay on October 19, 1972. In the chorus, he abandons his Les Paul in order to create an astonishing, luminous atmosphere of epic character. He does this by strumming a rhythm part on his Harmony Sovereign H1260 acoustic (positioned in stereo), against which he plays resounding chords on his Fender Electric XII that literally explode in deep reverb. The twelve-string is then double-tracked. All of the guitar overdubs were recorded at Island Studios because, in Page's words, the track "had a lot of chiming guitars and

Ginger Baker, another virtuoso British rock drummer, whose duel with Elvin Jones gave John Bonham ideas.

things."[37] The sound of the twelve-strings recorded by Andy Johns for "Stairway to Heaven" using the Universal Audio 1176LN Limiting Amplifier compressor can be recognized again here. The compression gives the sound a bounce that explodes in the reverb provided by the EMT 140 plate. In the refrains a countermelody can be heard that may have been played on the Gibson Les Paul but was most likely produced by John Paul Jones on the synthesizer. The synthesizer can definitely be heard in the instrumental section of the track after the last refrain (from 3:04). No member of the group has ever revealed the model of synthesizer, but it may well have been a Minimoog, a type manufactured from 1970.

Robert Plant delivers a lead vocal that differs considerably from his usual style, with his voice positioned at the very limit of his vocal range, above all in the refrains (where he also doubles himself). His voice has a fragility that lends it an almost whining quality in places (listen to the outro from 3:55). He was perhaps seeking to accentuate the color of the track with a certain vocal freedom that is somewhat alien to rock music.

As with "Stairway to Heaven," the sound engineer Phill Brown claims to have recorded overdubs at Island in May. However, the dates do not correspond, and Brown is not credited on the album sleeve (see "Stairway to Heaven" page 260).

"Four Sticks" is an incredible track and one that once again showcases the exceptional qualities of each of the musicians and also demonstrates the growing appeal of the Orient for Jimmy Page and Robert Plant.

The lyricist and composer of "Four Sticks," united on this twilight journey.

GOING TO CALIFORNIA

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:36

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six-string and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: mandolin
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: February 1971 (?)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At the very beginning of the track (0:01 precisely), someone can be heard taking a deep breath.

Genesis

The music for "Going to California" originated, during the sessions at Headley Grange, in a stroke of inspiration on Jimmy Page's part. "You didn't have anything like a snooker table or anything like that. No recreational pursuits at all. It was really good for discipline and getting on with the job. I suppose that's why a lot of these came at Headley Grange. For instance, 'Going to California' and 'Battle of Evermore' came out."[60]

The four members of Led Zeppelin had been continuing their journey, which led them with this song to the shores of the Pacific. Just as Page's laid-back music is reminiscent of Californian folk rock, Plant's lyrics extol the West Coast spirit: flower power and the counterculture and creative excitement that were at their zenith in the sixties. It is a song dedicated to "the days when things were really nice and simple, and everything was far out all the time,"[47] to borrow words addressed to the crowd by Robert Plant at one of two concerts given by the band in Berkeley, California, in September 1971. Many years later, in 2002, Plant would provide a little more detail, telling *Spin* magazine that the song was "Me reflecting on the first years of the group, when I was only about…20, and was struggling to find myself in the midst of all the craziness of California and the band and the groupies."[77] The line *The Mountains and the canyons start to tremble and shake, the children of the sun begin to awake* alludes in all likelihood to the artistic community of Laurel Canyon, embodied in late sixties by Joni Mitchell, David Crosby, Graham Nash, Stephen Stills, Jackson Browne, and Jim Morrison.

The first-person narrator has taken the decision to *make a new start* and to abandon *a woman unkind*. The line *Someone told me there's a girl out there with love in her eyes and flowers in her hair* evokes Joni Mitchell, who, since leaving her native Canada, had occupied a place on the Californian avant-garde

Joni Mitchell, the voice of California folk rock, actually came from Alberta, Canada. "Going to California" can be regarded as a tribute to the singer.

musical scene both as a musician and as a symbol of the counterculture. This reference in the form of a tribute is corroborated by the beginning of the fourth and last verse: *To find a queen without a king, they say she plays guitar, cries, and sings* is surely an allusion to "I Had a King," the first song on Mitchell's debut album (*Song to a Seagull*, 1968). Both Plant and, above all, Page had fallen under the spell of the "lady of the canyon" at this time. "The main thing with Joni is that she's able to look at something that's happened to her, draw back and crystallize the whole situation, then write about it," notes Jimmy Page. "She brings tears to my eyes, what more can I say?"[60]

A gem of a West Coast–style folk-rock number revisited by four virtuosos of the English rock scene, "Going to California" was first performed onstage at a concert given by the group in Belfast on March 5, 1971, and would continue to be performed live until 1977. (It was given its very last performance at the Oakland–Alameda County Coliseum on July 24.)

Production

"Going to California" is the second track on the album—after "The Battle of Evermore"—with no contribution whatsoever from John Bonham. Indeed this superb acoustic ballad is performed by strings (two guitars and a mandolin) and voice alone. It seems to have been recorded exclusively at Headley Grange, using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, with no overdubs added at Island Studios. "'Going to California' was a thing I'd written before on acoustic guitar,"[37] explains Jimmy Page. It was nevertheless in the tranquility of southern England, in the old house in the middle of the countryside, that, with the help of John Paul Jones, he gave the song its shape during an evening in front of the fire.

The track opens with Jimmy Page's acoustic guitar. He is playing (fingerpicking) his Harmony Sovereign H1260 in open-G tuning (D G D G B D). Before long, John Paul Jones joins him on his C. F. Martin A-style mandolin (stereo left). The mood is bucolic, pastoral, and very British. Robert Plant's lead vocal then begins, gently, tenderly. Plant's performance is delicate and intimate, an impression accentuated by the total absence of reverb. His special gift is to be as at home singing ballads as he is performing the most unbridled rock number. Coinciding with Plant's entry, Page adds a second part on his Harmony Sovereign (on the right), which combines fingerpicking, licks, and chords. The harmonious blending of the three instruments is a real triumph, and in fact an instrumental version of the song can be found on CD2 of the deluxe edition of the album, giving a sense of just how well Page and Jones complement each other.

In the middle section of the song (from 1:41), the tonality changes from major to minor, hooking the listener all the more effectively as Robert Plant now adopts a powerful, high-pitched voice enhanced by generous, deep reverb. He then resumes his more soothing tone in the following verse, this time colored by light, short reverb. Finally, the outro ends with a fade-out, the instruments on the same D chord while Plant's reverb-drenched voice can be heard in the background (from 3:19).

For the record, when Jimmy Page traveled to California with Andy Johns to mix the album at Sunset

ORANGE
ORANGE

"Going to California" owes its gentle sonorities to a combination of mandolin and acoustic guitar.

Sound, a substantial earthquake hit the region. "I remember lying in bed while it was shaking up and down," explains Page, laughing. "I immediately flashed on "Going To California," where Robert sings, 'The mountains and canyons start to tremble and shake,' and all I could think was, Bloody hell, I'm not taking any chances—I'm going to mix that one *last*. Which I did!"[9] Andy Johns, meanwhile, showed a little more sangfroid: "I remember Jimmy saying: 'oh don't put that on there, it will cause another earthquake.' I said, 'oh, don't be so bloody stupid, gimme a break!'"[64]

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Robert Plant in particular was fascinated by the Laurel Canyon musical scene, a fascination that was not exactly reciprocated. "The people who lived in Laurel Canyon avoided us," explains the Led Zeppelin singer. "They kept clear because we were in the tackiest part of the Sunset Strip with tacky people like Kim Fowley and the GTOs."[47]

WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, Memphis Minnie / 7:08

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: electric guitars (six- (?) and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: November 1970, February 1971 (Studio One?)
Mixing
Sunset Sound Studios, Hollywood: February 1971
Island Studios, London: April 1971 (?)
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Andy Johns
Mixing for Alternative Version (UK Mix): George Chkiantz, Jerry (?)

Genesis

The Mississippi flood of spring 1927 is one of the most devastating natural catastrophes the United States has ever known. The floodwaters breached the levees, inundating parts of the southern states (Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Arkansas) and also Illinois. In total, about 27,000 square miles (70,000 square kilometers) were submerged by the "Big Muddy," as the river is aptly nicknamed. Some five hundred people lost their lives and 630,000 others were displaced, the vast majority of whom were African Americans, mostly cotton field workers who were forced to live for an extended period of time in makeshift camps. Many of them never returned to the southern states, instead making a new life for themselves in the larger cities of the Midwest.

Two years after the catastrophe, which went down in history as the Great Mississippi Flood, the blueswoman Memphis Minnie and her husband Kansas Joe McCoy recorded "When the Levee Breaks" (which Robert Plant had in his record collection) for Columbia in New York. Naturally enough, the lyrics deal with the fatal flood. *If it keeps on rainin', levee's goin' to break/And the water gonna come, have no place to stay*, sings McCoy. And then: *I works on the levee, mama, both night and day/I ain't got nobody, keep the water away*. Forty-two years later, the four members of Led Zeppelin chose not only to revisit this Delta blues, but also to close their *Four Symbols* album with it. The song marks a kind of "back to square one" (that is to say back to the blues) after the wonderful occult journey the album has taken them on.

Robert Plant has used various phrases from the original lyrics but has also incorporated elements from the wider blues tradition. *When you're trying to find your way home and you don't know which way to go/If you're going down south and they've no work to do*. Here the Led Zeppelin singer is alluding to the migration north of African Americans (which had actually started well before the 1927 flood), to the industrial city of

"When the Levee Breaks" would remain one of the supreme examples of John Bonham's extraordinary drumming.

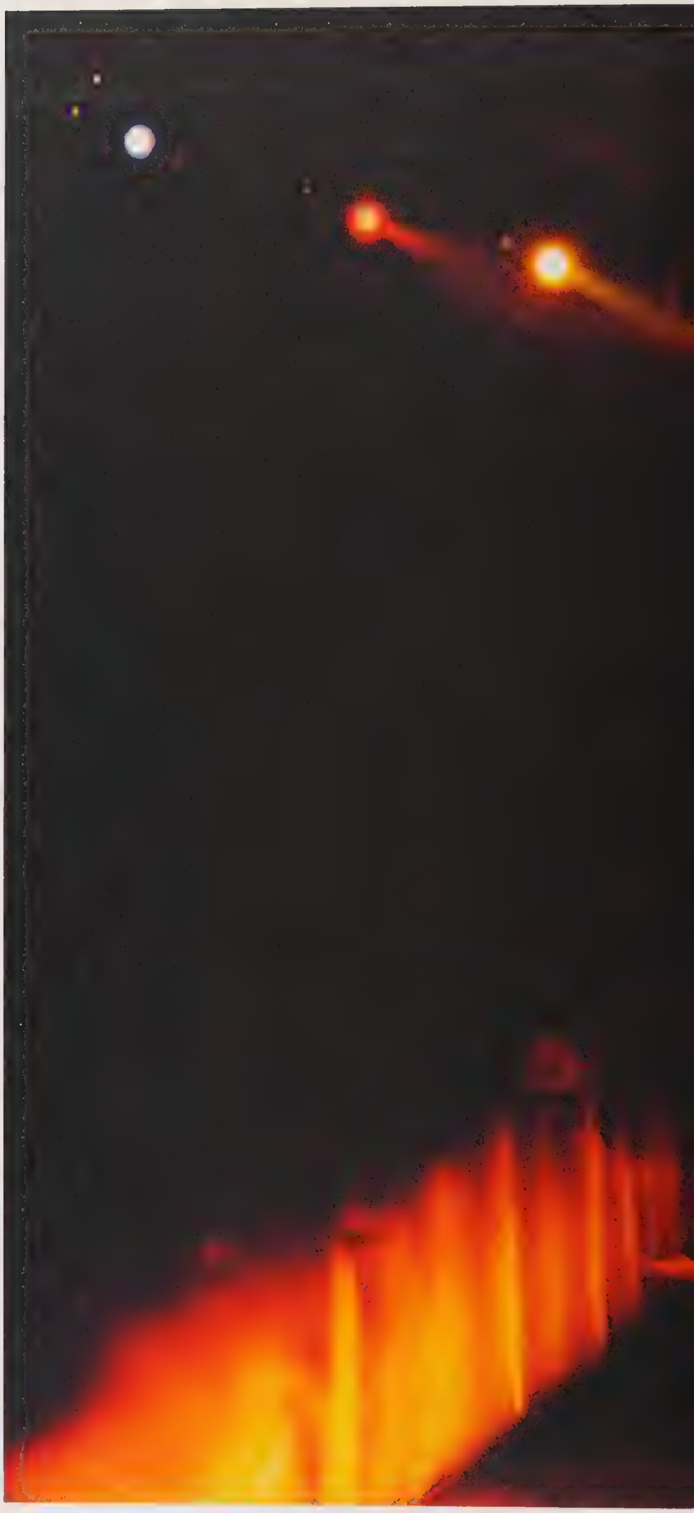
Chicago in particular. These children and grandchildren of slaves were driven by the prospect of a better life—hence the image of the northern states as a new promised land—but at the same time it was a painful wrench for all those who had to leave their loved ones and abandon a "happy home." *Crying won't help you, praying won't do you no good*: this ancestral disillusion makes the blues a music of pure emotion.

"When the Levee Breaks" has to be one of the best tributes ever paid by a British rock band to the pioneers of the blues. "I don't trust anyone who doesn't like Led Zeppelin,"[78] said musician Jack White after listening to this adaptation of Memphis Minnie's blues. The band would play it only rarely onstage, however. They used it as a warm-up number in Rotterdam and Brussels in January 1975, and then at their Chicago show on January 20. Twenty years later, Page and Plant performed it on their 1994 MTV *Unledded Special*, and again with Neil Young and the drummer Michael Lee at Led Zeppelin's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony (1995). Also worthy of mention are John Paul Jones's instrumental version (on his 1999–2000 tour) and Robert Plant's version with Alison Krauss (2008).

Production

The last track on the album, "When the Levee Breaks" is astonishing in its execution. Above all it is John Bonham's extraordinary drum sound that seizes the listener's attention, his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" imposing its mesmerizing power and color from the very first beat. This unique

Led Zeppelin at the Casino Hall in Montreux on August 7, 1971. Why the quartet only performed "When the Levee Breaks" in concert once remains a mystery.



sonority has its origins in Jimmy Page's continual and almost obsessive quest for the most magnetic, fascinating drum sound he could find. In his search for a new sonority, the guitarist-producer tried out the different rooms at Headley Grange (where the group first tried to record the number) and experimented with the placing of the mics. But to achieve what he wanted, he needed help. "It was always better for me to find an engineer who knew exactly what I was talking about," says Page. "After a while I didn't have to argue because they KNEW that I knew what I was talking about."[4] And the engineer who had a perfect understanding of his vision was the talented Andy Johns.

However, the drum sound was also the result of a lucky coincidence. A second Ludwig "Green Sparkle" had just been delivered to Headley and was left temporarily in the entrance hall. During a break, Bonham went to try it out and the sound was phenomenal! Accounts differ as to who exactly was responsible for the way in which it was then recorded. Jimmy Page has explained that upon hearing Bonzo in the hall, the band members said to one another: "We're not going to take the drums out of here!"[9] Andy Johns provides a completely different account: "One night Zeppelin were all going down the boozer and I said, 'You guys bugger off but Bonzo, you stay behind because I've got an idea.' So we took his kit out of the room where the other guys had been recording and stuck it in this lobby area. I got a couple of microphones and put them up the first set of the stairs."[64] Although the two versions differ, it is nevertheless true that Johns positioned a pair of Beyerdynamic M160 mics above the drums with two limiter/compressors from the Helios console and used Jimmy Page's Binson Echorec 2 to generate an echo, which he also compressed. "And so playing at that particular tempo on 'Levee' the limiters had time to breathe and that's how Bonzo got that 'Ga Gack' sound because of the Binson. He wasn't playing that. It was the Binson that made him sound like that."[64] A comparison between the album track and one of the earliest versions of the song, recorded at Island Studios on November 11, 1970, under the title "If It Keeps on Raining," (available on CD2 of the deluxe edition of *Coda*, released in 2015) reveals that this early take differs substantially from the definitive version.

Upon their return, Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones shut themselves away in another room and recorded the backing track as a trio. Andy Johns rushed out to the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio to check the results: "I had never heard anything like it and the drum sound was quite spectacular."[64] Bonzo himself was as astonished as the rest of the team. Andy Johns would regret having not used the technique again during the seventies, and notes that Jimmy Page employed it in 1975 on "Kashmir" (*Physical Graffiti*).

Steeped in the Blues

"When the Levee Breaks" begins, then, with Bonham's drums, whose incredible sonority would be sampled

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

A multitude of artists, including various rap groups, have sampled John Bonham's rhythm part on "When the Levee Breaks" including the Beastie Boys on "Rhymin' & Stealin'" (*Licensed to Ill*, 1986), Coldcut on "Beats + Pieces" (*What's That Noise?*, 1989), and Dr. Dre on "Lyrical Gangbang" (*The Chronic*, 1992), to name just a few.

countless times in later years. John's son Jason Bonham would never tire of singing his father's praises: "It's the drum intro of the Gods. You could play it anywhere and people would know it's John Bonham. I never had the chance to tell dad how amazing he was—he was just dad."[80] On the guitar side, Jimmy Page would claim he had been working on this riff since before Bonham asserted himself on his Ludwig kit. Page plays bottleneck on his Fender Electric XII (in the right-hand channel) in open-G tuning (D G D G B D). On disc, however, the key is not G but F. The reason? "It sounds lower because we slowed the track down to make everything sound more intense," reveals Jimmy Page. "That's also part of what makes that track sound so huge."[9] John Paul Jones accompanies him on his Jazz Bass, his tuning also down a tone, the effect of which is to emphasize Bonham's punch.

"When the Levee Breaks" is also, of course, classic Robert Plant, who distinguishes himself on two fronts: harmonica and vocals. He starts by delivering a superb harmonica part on his B-flat Hohner Marine Band—extremely bluesy, and distorted in the style of Little Walter. The sound is strongly colored by reverb and also reverse echo. The effect is magnificent, in perfect symbiosis with Bonham's Ludwig. He then launches into the first verse in a drawling, equally bluesy voice with excellent vibrato. When all is said and done, it is astonishing to hear four Englishmen so utterly steeped in the blues.

At the end of the verse, Jimmy Page launches into a second melodic motif, his Fender presumably colored by flanging (from 2:25). Another guitar answers immediately with a distorted lick probably played slide on the Gibson Les Paul (2:32 in the left-hand channel). Robert Plant then embarks on a more rock-style lead vocal in a higher range, before playing another harmonica solo that is just as inspired as the first, the reverse echo and reverb a little more present than before, producing a dense and swampy sound (from 3:05). For the return of the verse, his voice, which has resumed its former drawl, is deformed by a light phasing that accentuates its haunting quality (from 4:08).

Survivor of a Disastrous Mix

The outro provides Jimmy Page, wearing his producer's hat, the opportunity to apply some technical manipulations of various kinds (from 5:50). The guitars wander around the stereo field, Plant's voice is strongly deformed by phasing (listen to the phrase *Sorry but I can't take you* at 6:01!), backward guitars are introduced (at 6:23), and the track ends on a chord that resounds with demonic reverb. "'When the Levee Breaks' is probably the most subtle thing on there as far as production goes," comments Page, "because each 12 bars has something new about it, though at first it might not be apparent."[37] And he lists "backwards harmonica, backwards echo, phasing, and there's also flanging; and at the end, you get this super-dense sound, in layers, that's all built around the drum track."[79]

When Jimmy Page and Andy Johns came back from Los Angeles with the tapes of the mixed album under their arms, the listening session organized at Olympic Studios in London laid bare a disaster almost across the board; as a result, Page and Johns had to remix the whole album at Island Studios. That is, the whole album except for one track: "When the Levee Breaks," which had miraculously escaped the fate of the others. In the words of Andy Johns: "That, for some reason turned out alright."[64]

"When the Levee Breaks" brings Led Zeppelin's fourth album to a magisterial close. This adaptation of the Memphis Minnie number is far removed from the original, but there can be little doubt that the great lady of the blues would have been flattered.

Memphis Minnie and her husband, Kansas Joe McCoy, who recorded "When the Levee Breaks" in New York in 1929.

MEMPHIS MINNIE, THE GREAT LADY OF THE DELTA BLUES

Lizzie Douglas was nicknamed Memphis Minnie (after Walt Disney's female mouse) by a director of Columbia when she recorded her first blues numbers in New York in 1929. Her husband Joe McCoy, meanwhile, was given the sobriquet "Kansas." Born in 1897 in Algiers, Louisiana, she spent her childhood in Walls, Mississippi, not far from Memphis, Tennessee. It was on Beale Street, the main artery of Memphis's red-light district, that she made her debut as a blues singer and guitarist. She cut her first records, notably "Bumble Bee" and "When the Levee Breaks," as one half of a duo with Joe McCoy, who was also a singer and guitarist. After separating from Kansas Joe McCoy, she pursued her career in Chicago with a pianist and a second guitarist.

The great originality of this blueswoman was not to give in to the siren call of the more sophisticated blues that was the order of the day in thirties Chicago (the Bluebird sound) but instead to carry on playing Delta blues of the purest kind, along the lines of "Me and My Chauffeur Blues." Memphis Minnie died in Memphis in 1973. She had a huge influence on the likes of Big Mama Thornton, Jo Ann Kelly, and Lucinda Williams as well as on groups such as Led Zeppelin and Jefferson Airplane.

The British occultist Aleister Crowley, whose philosophy and taste for the bizarre were strong influences on Jimmy Page's intellectual outlook.

ALEISTER CROWLEY, THE BLACK-MAGIC MAN

The Bad Vibrations at Boleskine House

Jimmy Page has remained relatively mum on the subject of his links with the world of esotericism. But such links nevertheless exist. There was one man in particular who was a major influence on how Page apprehended the complexity of the world: Aleister Crowley. Such an admirer was the Led Zeppelin guitarist of Crowley's works and intellectual approach that in the early seventies he financed the Equinox, a bookshop that specialized in occult works, including the original edition of Crowley's four-volume anthology of his magazine *The Equinox*, and began to collect items that belonged to the occultist. Even more revealing, he purchased Boleskine House, the home of the master of the uncanny on the southern shores of Loch Ness in Scotland. This was a manor house with a terrifying reputation, where black masses had been celebrated and sacrifices of various kinds had been made, and where a decapitated human head is said to have rolled around the parquet floor of one bedroom. Jimmy Page confided in 1975: "There had been one or two other owners before he moved in to the house. Also, a church had burned down on this spot with its entire congregation inside. It's the site…Strange things happened here that had nothing to do with Crowley. Bad vibrations were already present."[81]

The Beast

Edward Alexander Crowley, who had thus been a kind of spiritual guide for Jimmy Page at one stage in the guitarist's life, was born on October 12, 1875, in Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. His parents were well off—his father, Edward Crowley, had been the director of a thriving brewery—and were members of a highly puritanical sect known as the Exclusive Brethren, (also known as the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church). The young Edward also studied at one of the sect's schools, whose strict discipline caused him to distance himself from Christianity. His father died in 1886 and Edward eventually moved to Cambridge, where he studied at the prestigious Trinity College. It was apparently around this time that his mother gave him the sorry nickname "the Beast" (in reference to the "number of the beast" in the New Testament book of Revelation).

By the time the young troublemaker abandoned his two given names in favor of Aleister (the Gaelic version of Alastor—a demon according to Jacques Collin de Plancy in his *Dictionnaire infernal*, but also the title of a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley), he was leading a dissolute life in the company of prostitutes and had developed an interest in occultism. At the end of the nineteenth century, profoundly affected by his reading of *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts* by the British American poet and occultist Arthur Edward Waite, he joined, or rather was admitted into, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a secret society founded a few years earlier by William Wynn Westcott, whose members included a number of well-known names from the British and Irish literary world, from William Butler Yeats to Algernon Blackwood to Sax Rohmer. Crowley is subsequently thought to have been a member of Old George Pickingill's coven of witches before joining various Masonic lodges.

Sex Magick

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Aleister Crowley undertook a number of initiatory journeys. It was in Egypt, during his honeymoon with Rose Edith Skerrett, that he wrote out the *Liber Legis* (*The Book of the Law*), which he claimed was dictated to him by an entity he referred to as Aiwass. In this work he reveals his mystical vision of the world under the influence of a new religion,

Boleskine House by the shores of Loch Ness in Scotland. The manor house had belonged to Aleister Crowley and in 1971 was purchased by Jimmy Page, who held onto it for some twenty years. In 2015 the house was destroyed by fire.

the Aeon of Horus, whose aim was to connect mankind with the spiritual power of the sun, and a philosophy, Thelema, based on the following concepts: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law" (a rereading of the novel *Gargantua* by Rabelais, which contains the motto of the fictional Abbey of Thelema: *Fais ce que voudras*), love is the law, love as one wills it, and every man and every woman is a star. By which we are to understand that there are no "norms of good" or morality, which are mere nonsense. According to Crowley, the world needs to be liberated from all forms of sexual repression, and indeed human fulfillment can only be realized through fully achieved sexual experiences that he calls "sex magick" (the inspiration for which came from Tantrism).

Orgies, black magic, and Satanism in the Victorian and post-Victorian ages...Aleister Crowley came to be regarded as the very embodiment of the forces of evil—a reputation that dogged him to the end of his days, which came in Hastings, Sussex, on December 1, 1947. He has been accused of advocating the sacrifice of babies (when he had simply said, provocatively, that every time he masturbated he killed 150,000 infants) and of nurturing Nazi sympathies (although it has been proven that he invented the "V for victory" sign popularized by none other than Winston Churchill). As for Crowley's aversion to Christianity, this did not prevent him from frequently referencing Saint Augustine. When all is said and done, looking beyond his Machiavellian image, Aleister Crowley was a brilliant provocateur and visionary with a loathing of the hypocrisies of Victorian society just as he would later come to loathe the false modernity of the consumer society. To a certain extent, this is the view Jimmy Page took of this extraordinary character: "Crowley, for the most part, is misunderstood. His message was of personal liberation. He encouraged people to ask what they really want out of life and encouraged them to do it. For example, he wrote about the equality of the sexes, and that was shocking in the Edwardian age. He wasn't necessarily waving a banner, but he knew women's liberation was inevitable. He was a visionary and he did not present his views gently. I do not agree with everything he said or wrote, but I find a lot of it relevant."[9] The Belgian author and publisher Stephan

Hoebeeck, a brilliant interpreter of Crowley's hermetic works, sees him as an "heir to antique wisdom."

Rock Music and the Beast

The writings of this intellectual provocateur have met with an enthusiastic response from rock musicians. In addition to Jimmy Page, other notable examples include David Bowie in "Quicksand" (*Hunky Dory*, 1971), Ozzy Osbourne in "Mr Crowley" (*Blizzard of Oz*, 1980) and John Frusciante (Red Hot Chili Peppers) in "Emptiness," "I'm Around," and "666" (*Inside of Emptiness*, 2004), not forgetting the Beatles, who chose to include Crowley on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967).

1. THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME 2. THE RAIN SONG 3. OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY
4. THE CRUNGE 5. DANCING DAYS 6. D'YER MAK'ER 7. NO QUARTER 8. THE OCEAN

ALBUM HOUSES OF THE HOLY

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: March 26, 1973

Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: K 50014

Number 1 (United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Canada); Number 3 (France and Japan)

HOUSES OF THE HOLY

John Bonham, Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and Robert Plant on their way to Japan. Singapore, though, would deny them entry on account of their long hair.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

On February 14, 1972, Led Zeppelin was due to give a concert at the National Theatre in Singapore. But at the last moment they were denied permission. Their crime: their hair was too long (under the country's "anti-hippie" policy).

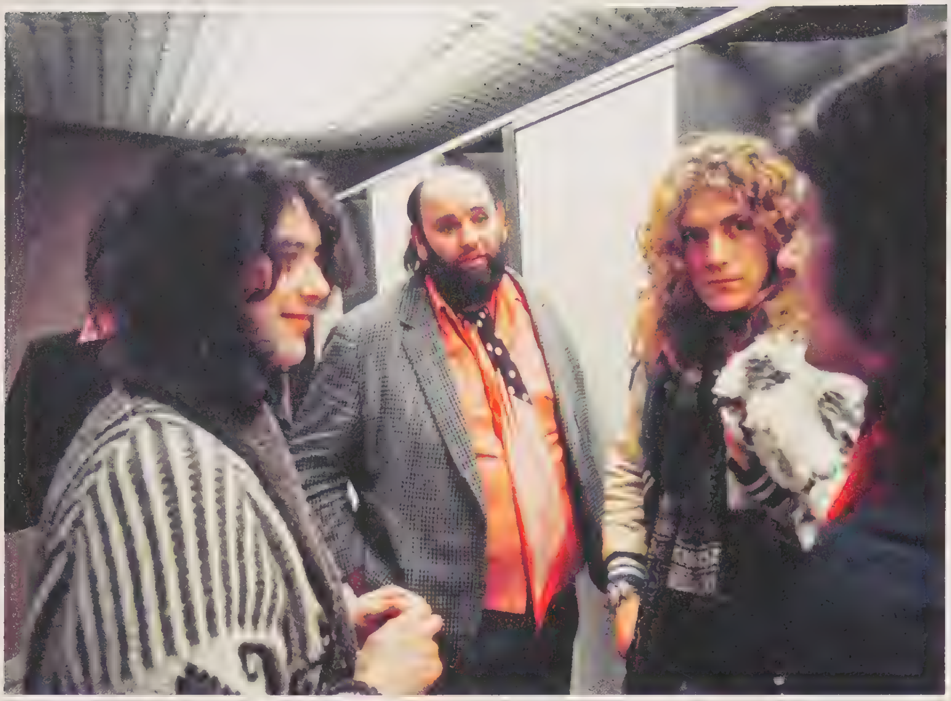
TOWARD A PROGRESSIVE HARD ROCK

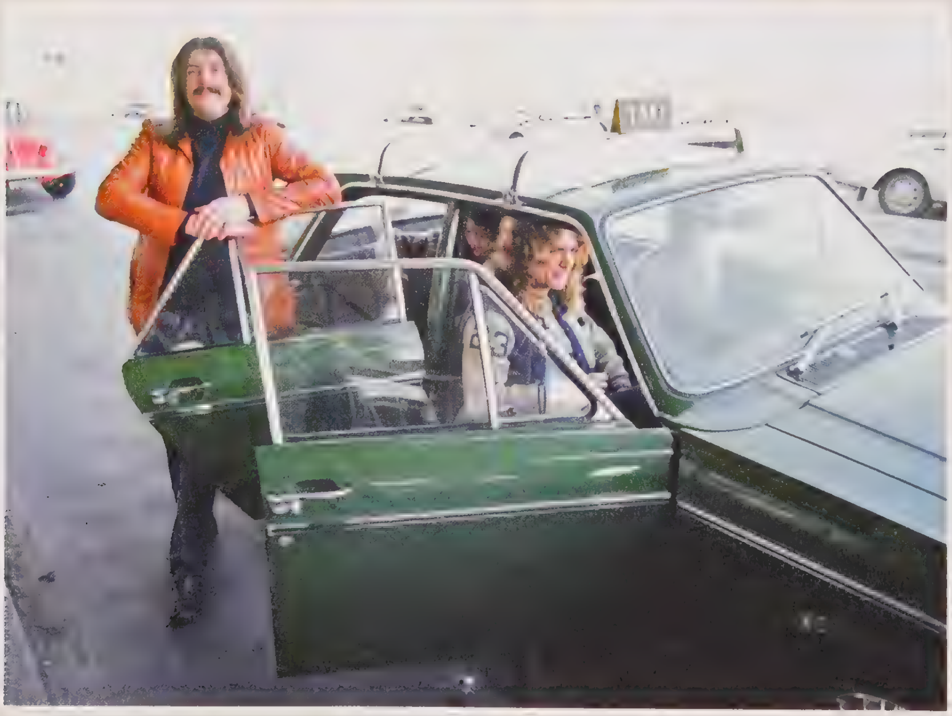
Led Zeppelin's fourth album came out in November 1971, following the band's first Japanese tour and just ahead of their fourth UK tour. They continued promoting their opus onstage throughout 1972. Between February and December, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham played a series of dates in Australia and New Zealand (February 16–29), the United States (June 6–28), Japan (October 2–10), and the United Kingdom (November 30–December 23), as well as two shows in the Netherlands and Belgium (May 27 and 28) and two in Switzerland (October 28 and 29). In a particularly striking example of the quartet's global popularity, special transport was arranged to enable some 25,000 fans to travel from all the islands of New Zealand to be at the show in Auckland on February 25.

This grueling schedule was evidence of Peter Grant's determination to keep his protégés at the pinnacle of the rock scene, at a time when it was undergoing a profound seismic shift. While the Rolling Stones continued to deliver their own explosive brand of blues rock with *Exile on Main St.* (May 1972) and David Bowie gave glam rock its crowning jewel in the shape of *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (June 1972), the progressive movement was enjoying massive popularity on both sides of the Atlantic.

Downtime

Despite their globetrotting trek from airport terminals to concert halls to hotel rooms, the four members of Led Zeppelin did manage some time off, which they spent with their families. Robert Plant, for example, planned to start raising sheep, having moved with his wife and daughter to a farm in Worcestershire (at the time, Maureen was pregnant with their second child, Karac); John Bonham spent time at the pub with his friends; and John Paul Jones guarded his privacy in the comfort of his family home. Jimmy Page, meanwhile, acquired another residence for the modest sum of £200,000, an exquisite Elizabethan manor house in Plumpton, a small village in East Sussex. Christened Plumpton Place, this new pad provided him with a home to store his various collections of antiques and guitars, as his Pangbourne house by the Thames was under threat of flooding. It also enabled him to realize his long-cherished dream of building his own home studio. He was also individually approached by underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger, who asked him to compose the soundtrack to *Lucifer Rising*, a movie whose title and subject matter couldn't fail to arouse his curiosity, especially given the two men's shared interest in Aleister Crowley. Although made in 1972, the movie





Top: Jimmy Page, Peter Grant, and Robert Plant at the Hardrock Concert Theatre in Manchester, where Led Zeppelin performed on December 7 and 8, 1972. **Bottom:** An Austrian taxi for the Zeppelin four during their European tour in March–April 1973.

Robert Plant hitches a ride! A touch of British humor in Vienna, where Led Zeppelin played a concert on March 16, 1973.

Plumpton Place, the Elizabethan manor house in East Sussex.

was not distributed in its final form until the early eighties in the United Kingdom. And although Page had already composed the soundtrack (which was not released until 2012), a fight between Jimmy's wife Charlotte Martin and the filmmaker prompted Anger to then ask Bobby Beausoleil—also an actor in the movie—to take care of the soundtrack instead of Page. Beausoleil, a former member of the Manson family, wrote it in prison in California, where he is serving a life sentence for the 1969 murder of Gary Hinman.

The Album

Was it that spectacular new musical phenomenon, progressive rock, that prompted the four members of Led Zeppelin to question their blues roots in the run-up to the sessions for the fifth album? It's not impossible. What is clear is that they were determined to not repeat themselves, which would have been the easy option, but to surprise people, and themselves most of all, as well as all those who had been following them for four years of LPs. The only guiding principle was that they give free rein to their imaginations as musicians and songwriters (though Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones had both recorded rough versions of a number of pieces). "Although everyone was clamoring for another *Led Zeppelin IV*, it's very dangerous to try and duplicate yourself," Jimmy Page explained. "I won't name any names, but I'm sure you've heard bands that endlessly repeat themselves. After four or five albums, they just burn up. With us, you never knew what was coming."[87]

Titled *Houses of the Holy*, this fifth album is probably more electric than any of the band's previous output. Here, for the first time, we find no referencing of blues whatsoever, but instead a bold venture into reggae ("D'yer Mak'er") and funk ("The Crunge"). "The Song Remains the Same," "The Rain Song," and "No Quarter" are even more indicative of Led Zeppelin's change of direction, as these three compositions, besides

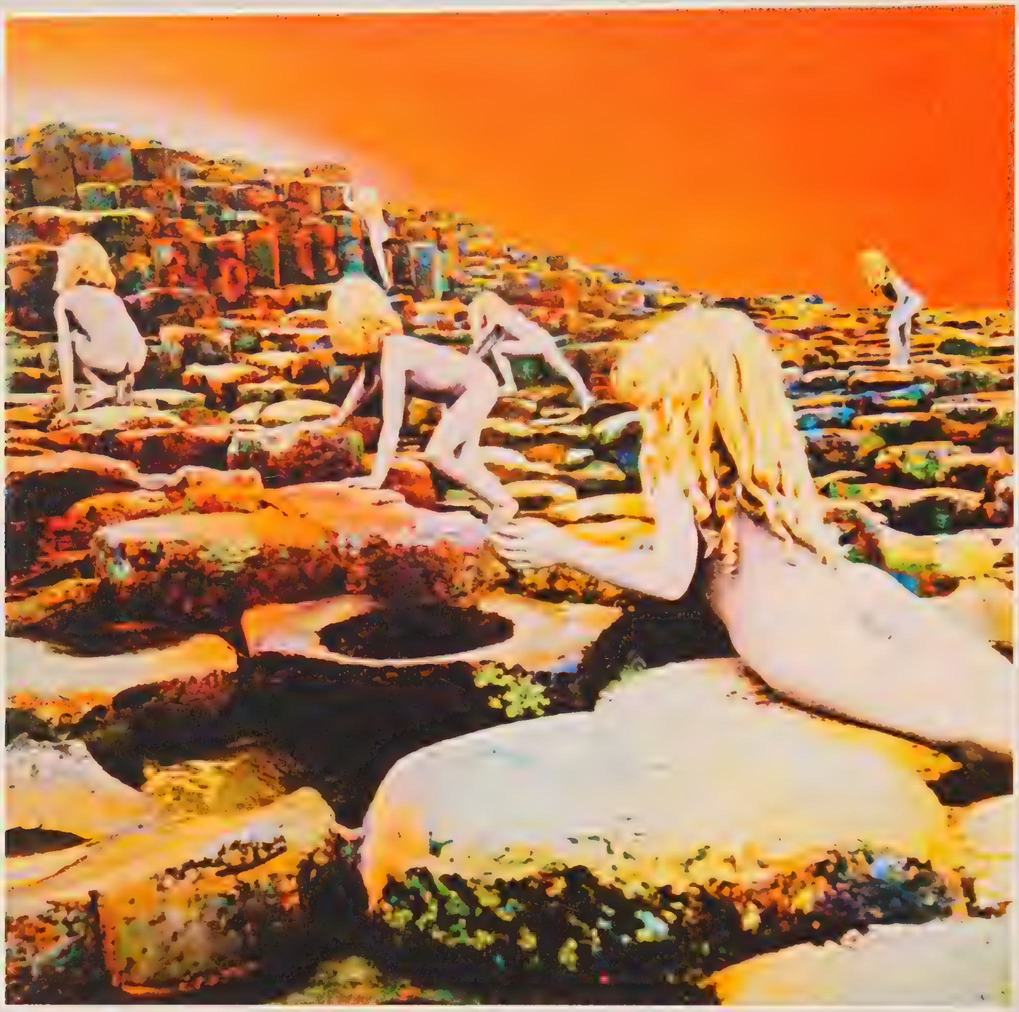
Underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger during the shooting of *Lucifer Rising*. Jimmy Page had been approached to compose the soundtrack for the movie.

Before Jimmy Page acquired *Plumpton Place* in 1972, George and Pattie Harrison had tried to buy it in 1969. But according to the wife of the Beatle, the owner of the property had declined their offer, claiming that she couldn't possibly entrust her magnificent residence to a rock star. Instead, the mansion was bought by the village doctor…who later sold it to the actor Michael Caine, before Jimmy Page took possession of it. He eventually sold it in 1985, for the tidy sum of £650,000.

confirming the ever more central role of John Paul Jones, bear the hallmarks of the incoming progressive movement. "Over the Hills and Far Away," meanwhile, underlines the band's attachment to folk tradition and acoustic arrangements (in the first part of the song, at least), just as "Dancing Days" confirms the influence of Indian music. Only "The Ocean" is a true rock piece, and even it has a somewhat disconcerting feel to it. "I would say *Houses of the Holy* is an album of many moods," explains Jimmy Page. "Each song captures an essence of a feeling, an emotion or sensitivity, and you can hear the band maturing as we play all these different styles. […] You can see the expansion and risks we were taking. Or should I say, the new territory that is there to be civilized and conquered,"[87] he says with a laugh.

Robert Plant penned the lyrics around the fourfold themes of world peace ("The Song Remains the Same"), love ("The Rain Song," "Over the Hills and Far Away," "Dancing Days," plus, in a way, "The Ocean"), humor and parody ("The Crunge," "D'yer Mak'er") and Norse mythology ("No Quarter"). Jimmy Page was very pleased with this collection of songs: "I'm happy about that because there's a hell of a lot in that LP. It's not easy one-time listening, and that's good. You've got to sit down and listen, think about a few things. We can't allow ourselves the luxury of becoming fascinated with our own popularity. The way I look at it, if the Beatles were to get back together, they would forget all about us."[21]

Led Zeppelin's third tour of continental Europe kicked off at the K. B. Hallen in Copenhagen on March 2, 1973, concluding on April 2 at the Palais des Sports in Paris (Saint-Ouen). Those fortunate enough to get tickets to the shows early on in the tour got to enjoy a preview of "Over the Hills and Far Away," "Dancing Days," "The Song Remains the Same," "The Rain Song," and "The Ocean" (played as an encore). The eight songs on the album were unveiled to the wider public on March 26, 1973, in the United Kingdom and on March 28 in the United States. Before long, *Houses of the Holy* reached number 1 in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia; number 3 in France and Japan; number 4 in Italy; and number 8 in West Germany. Yet despite the album being a huge commercial success, with an excess of 11 million copies sold in the United States alone, and eventually making it onto *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of "500 Greatest Albums of All Time" (at number 148), it still initially disappointed many of the band's fans. There was no hard rock along the lines of "Whole Lotta Love," and no



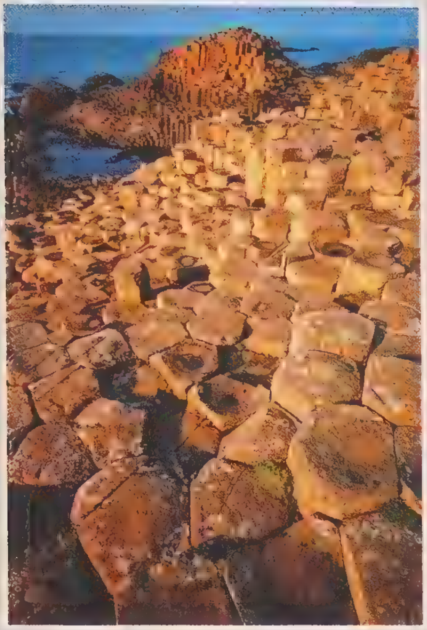
The sleeve of *Houses of the Holy*, produced by the Hipgnosis studio.

melody quite as subtle and mesmerizing as "Stairway to Heaven" to lay on the turntable and listen to over and over. As always, the critics too were fairly scathing. "The overall effect is that they seem afraid to play what they do best, which is the blues,"[82] wrote Chris Welch in *Melody Maker*. Gordon Fletcher, writing in the columns of *Rolling Stone*, was left puzzled: "Even after a hundred listenings I'm still not convinced this album is by the same group that brought us the likes of 'Communication Breakdown,' 'Heartbreaker,' and 'Black Dog.'"[83] And he added, "*Houses of the Holy* is one of the dullest and most confusing albums I've heard this year."[83]

Jimmy Page, for whom critics' opinions were no longer that important, saw this fifth album as being in a different league. "It usually takes a year for people to catch up with what we're doing,"[84] he once told Cameron Crowe. Robert Plant expressed the same sentiment: "There was a lot of imagination on that record. I prefer it much more than the fourth album."[84]

The Sleeve

A first in the Led Zeppelin discography: the job of designing the sleeve was entrusted to the famous London studio Hipgnosis, founded by the two brilliant graphic designers Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey "Po" Powell—famous for having produced the artwork for Pink Floyd's albums, from *A Saucerful of Secrets* (1968) onward, as well as having designed the sleeves for *Parachute* (1970) and *Freeway Madness* (1972) by the Pretty Things, *Electric Warrior* (1971) by T. Rex, not to mention *Pilgrimage* (1971) and *Argus* (1972) by Wishbone Ash. At an initial meeting with the band members and Peter Grant, Storm Thorgerson was told that the fifth album would be called *Houses of the Holy*—a fairly obscure reference that Jimmy Page had come across, according to which the human race is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. A few days later the designer returned with an illustration as peculiar as the title: an electric green tennis court with a tennis racquet in the center. Thorgerson hazarded an explanation: "Racquet, racket…get it?" Was



The Giant's Causeway overlooking the ocean in Northern Ireland.

Stefan Gates and his sister, Samantha. Brother and sister were photographed for the album cover.

this one more provocation by Thorgerson? The guitar hero, certainly, was less than impressed at hearing Led Zeppelin's music likened to a terrible din and, having sent the graphic designer away, asked his friend and Hipgnosis partner Aubrey Powell to take his place. Powell found inspiration when looking at the cover of the science fiction book *Childhood's End* (1953) by Arthur C. Clarke, an early edition of which features a semi-crouching teenager in a seemingly hostile environment. The idea? Ten or so children, naked and blond, clambering over a rocky landscape under a faded orange sky. On the back, the same visual but in blue, as if night had fallen on the kids. What might this enigmatic photomontage signify? Is it meant to be an apocalyptic scenario? An esoteric reference (perhaps known only to Jimmy Page)? An allusion to *Village of the Damned*, the legendary 1960 horror film by Wolf Rilla? No one knows for sure.

Shooting took place over a period of ten days or so due to appalling weather, not among the archeological remains of the Nazca civilization in Peru (as originally planned), but near the town of Bushmills in Northern Ireland, at the Giant's Causeway, an area of about 40,000 interlocking basalt columns. "It promptly rained for ten days straight," Aubrey Powell recalls. "I shot the whole thing in black and white on a totally miserable morning pouring with rain. Originally, I'd intended the children to be gold and silver. Because I shot in black and white and it was a gray day, the children turned out very white. So when we hand-tinted it, the airbrush artist, by accident, put a kind of purple tinge onto them. When I first saw it, I said, 'Oh, my God.' Then we looked at it, and I said, 'Hang on a minute, this has an otherworldly quality.' So we left it as it was. Everybody was so cold, and so freaked out because it wasn't working, that the only thing I could keep everybody together with was a bottle of Mandrax and a lot of whiskey."[85]

The six children photographed by Aubrey Powell at dawn and dusk are in fact just two children, Samantha Gates and her younger brother Stefan Gates (then aged five), who would find fame years later as the presenter of the highly popular BBC program *Cooking in the Danger Zone*. "I've heard people saying they put wigs on several children," he comments. "But there was only me and my sister and that's our real hair. I used to love being naked when I was that age so I didn't mind."[85] Later, Stefan Gates admitted to having never listened to *Houses of the Holy*.

The photograph on the inner sleeve hints at a human sacrifice: standing on a mountainside under a blue sky fading to yellow, an adult holds out a young child as if presenting it to the gods. It was taken at the Giant's Causeway, at the foot of the medieval Dunluce Castle.

As with the previous album, the outer sleeve of *Houses of the Holy* does not carry any information. However, Peter Grant did allow Atlantic Records to add a wraparound paper band on which the group's name, album name, and logo of the record label were printed in black. The inner sleeve for this album was the first (and last) to contain all the lyrics, in addition to the legal information. *Houses of the Holy* was nominated for a

Eddie Kramer at his mixing desk at Manhattan Center Studio in New York, 1994. He was one of three sound engineers involved in the recording of *Houses of the Holy*.

Grammy for Best Album Package at the sixteenth annual Grammy Awards.

The Recording

Production of *Houses of the Holy* got under way on December 3, 1971, in Studio 2 at Island Studios in London with the recording of a rough mix of "No Quarter," which was purely an instrumental at that point. For this version, which appears on the CD2 to the *Houses of the Holy* deluxe and super deluxe editions, it is Andy Johns who is at the controls, before he was taken off the project.

A few months later, in early 1972, the Led Zeppelin four assembled at Jabberwocky Studios in Puddletown, Dorset, for some initial rehearsals and to record demos. It was here, apparently, that the instrumental piece known as "The Overture" evolved into "The Song Remains the Same." In April, they moved to Olympic Studios in London for the first proper recordings, this time with George Chkiantz at the console. They had brought him on board again following his involvement in the recording of the second album (and an alternative mix of "When the Levee Breaks" on the fourth LP), but his arrival marked the definitive dismissal of Andy Johns, whom the band had not forgiven for the poor mixing of their previous album at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles.

After the sessions in Dorset and at Olympic, and with Headley Grange unavailable on this occasion, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham met at the end of April at Stargroves, Mick Jagger's mansion near Newbury, Berkshire. The Stones singer agreed

Stargroves, Mick Jagger's luxury mansion in Berkshire, venue for the album recording sessions.

to drop his price this time—which pleased Peter Grant. Jimmy Page then approached sound engineer Eddie Kramer, who had been involved in the sessions for *II*, but whose collaboration with Led Zeppelin on *III* had been brief. The dispute has arisen between Jimmy Page and Eddie Kramer during the mixing of *Led Zeppelin III* at Electric Lady Studios after one of the Led Zeppelin roadies had spilled Indian food on the floor of the studio, which Kramer got annoyed about, and tempers quickly flared. "We'd had a falling out, and I didn't hear from them for a year," he explains. "Then I got a call to come to England as if nothing had happened."[90]

During April and May, with Kramer as sound engineer and the help of the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Led Zeppelin recorded four of the eight songs that made the cut for *Houses of the Holy*—plus "Black Country Woman," "The Rover," and, somewhat bizarrely, "Houses of the Holy," which were picked for the following album, *Physical Graffiti* (1975), as well as "Walter's Walk," which was resurrected for *Coda* (1982).

The mood among them was upbeat, and Kramer was thrilled to be working with them again. He reported: "The weather was good, the atmosphere among the band was very jolly. Jimmy had Jagger's bedroom [...]. Everyone was happy."[86] The four band members were very productive, with Jimmy Page donning the producer's hat once again. As usual, he was on the lookout for unusual sounds and interesting vibes, and of course his sound engineer had a key part to play. "We were going for ambient sound," Kramer explained, "so we utilised every aspect of the house and its grounds we could. I remember putting a Fender amp in the fireplace and putting a mic up in there. Jonesy's bass was in another room. Everybody's gear was in a different room."[86] In particular, he placed John Bonham's Ludwig in a conservatory adjoining the building, using three mics to capture the sound. Kramer was staggered by the quality of his playing: "His sound was so great that it facilitated a monumental drum sound on record. You can't describe it; you have to hear it."[3] The sound engineer was blown away by the foursome. "They were so great to work with,"[3] he later said. They had no hesitation in recording outdoors, all of them sitting on the lawn, which happened on "Black Country Woman." And despite the various sound experiments, the quality of the songs is still perfectly consistent, and more clearly

Jimi Hendrix with Eddie Kramer (center) and Steve Marron (standing) at the future Electric Lady Studios, on June 17, 1970.

Houses of the Holy was originally entitled *Burn That Candle.*

apparent than on the previous albums, as Kramer would later comment.

After the Stargroves sessions, the band held a playback session at Olympic Studios. They were disappointed by the results, however, as the quality of the sound recording fell short of what they had hoped for. The fact is, the acoustics at Sir Mick Jagger's mansion were not as good as those at Headley Grange, a place that had enabled them to bring forth the extraordinary *Four Symbols*. The decision was taken to do their recording at Olympic Studios from then on, probably in May. It seems they then made a detour to Island Studios in London for a number of overdubs, before setting off for New York in June and finishing the album, overdubs and mixing included, at the famous Electric Lady Studios of the late Jimi Hendrix.

Though the band had worked on a fledgling version of "No Quarter" at London's Island Studios in December 1971, the recording of *Houses of the Holy* essentially took place between April and June 1972. A total of twelve songs were captured on tape, eight for the album, and four that then featured on *Physical Graffiti* and *Coda*. The result is quite disconcerting, which is exactly what Jimmy Page intended: "I thought it was important to make each Led Zeppelin album sound radically different than the one before. All the changes were intentional. That's why we used different engineers and different locations."[87]

The Team

Andy Johns, George Chkiantz, and Eddie Kramer were the three sound engineers involved in the recording and mixing of *Houses of the Holy*. Keith Harwood also played a part in the mixing of some tracks. He collaborated with the band on their next two albums before he was killed in a car accident in 1977. Besides Led Zeppelin, he had numerous high-profile collaborations to his name (the Rolling Stones, David Bowie, Humble Pie, and Thin Lizzy among them). Phill Brown was on hand at Island, this time getting an official mention in the mixing credits (on the CD2 to the deluxe edition), and Rod Thear was at Olympic, where he recorded King Crimson, the Rolling Stones, Santana. Thear also acted as assistant sound engineer, as did Bob Potter, who had previously helped out on *Led Zeppelin III* (at Island). Lastly, "Walter's Walk," an outtake from these sessions, which features on *Coda*, was mixed at Sol Studio, in Cookham, Berkshire, by Stuart Epps.

Technical Details

As far as Island Studios, Olympic Studios, and the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio were concerned, there was no change worth mentioning in the equipment used. When Eddie Kramer and the band headed to New York in June 1972, Electric Lady Studios is where they were based. The origins of this legendary establishment can be traced back to 1968, when Jimi

The EMS VCS3 "Putney," almost certainly one of the synthesizers used on *Houses of the Holy.*

Opposite: John Bonham and his famous Ludwig "Green Sparkle."

Hendrix and his manager, Michael Jeffery, bought the Generation, a nightclub at 52 West Eighth Street in Greenwich Village. Artists like Dave Van Ronk, Chuck Berry, B. B. King, and Sly and the Family Stone set the club alight with their riveting live performances. Hendrix had originally planned to continue with the live venue business model, but Eddie Kramer and Electric Lady studio manager Jim Marron convinced him instead to convert the space into a professional recording studio. Thus, on August 26, 1970, less than a month prior to his death (on September 18), Jimi Hendrix witnessed the inauguration of his own personal studios, which unfortunately he didn't use for very long. Artists from around the world were later drawn to this recording mecca, notably the Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, David Bowie, Patti Smith, AC/DC, and more recently Daft Punk, Beck, and Adele. The premises (Studios A and B) were kitted out with Datamix custom consoles with forty-eight input and twenty-four output channels, two sixteen-track Ampex MM-1100s, six EMT 140 plate reverbs, and Westlake TM-1 monitors.

The Instruments

John Bonham was happy to stick to his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" drum kit, and John Paul Jones his Fender Jazz Bass and his Hohner Electra-piano. However, both in the studio and onstage, it seems Jones also used a Hohner XK-250 fretless bass, as well as new keyboards such as the Mellotron MK2, the Farfisa VIP-255, the EMS VCS3, a Steinway grand piano, and probably a Hohner Clavinet D6. Jimmy Page used his familiar Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One" and his 1965 Fender Electric XII, but for the first time he also played a 1957 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst. For acoustic work, although his Harmony Sovereign H1260 and his Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola twelve-string were still in favor, it looks as if he recorded with a Martin D-28 as well.

Ludwig

Jimmy Page would play "The Song Remains the Same" live on his Gibson EDS-1275.

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:24

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars (six- and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972 (Studio 1) (?)
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: George Chkiantz (Olympic) (?), Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady)
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer, George Chkiantz

The working title for this song was "Plumpton and Worchester Races,» in reference to Jimmy Page's manor in the Sussex, Plumpton Place, and Worcestershire County dear to Robert Plant and famous for its racetrack, Worcester Racecourse.

Genesis

A classic example of Jimmy Page's guitar prowess and his fast-fingered dexterity, the opening track of *Houses of the Holy* started life as an instrumental. At early rehearsals at Jabberwocky Studios in Puddletown, it had actually had the working title "The Overture." Later, once Robert Plant had added some lyrics, the song was renamed first "The Campaign," then "The Plumpton and Worcester Races," and then finally "The Song Remains the Same."

Is Robert Plant revealing an idealistic side here? The sixties are over, but the Led Zeppelin singer still seems to be in thrall to the flower power ideals of peace and love. Like Martin Luther King, he had a dream, a *crazy dream*, a dream of world harmony through music. *California sunlight/Sweet Calcutta rain/Honolulu starbright/The song remains the same.* We are a long way here from John Lennon's *The dream is over*, and much closer to the mysticism of George Harrison. The reference in the last verse to the Hare Krishna mantra (*Hare-Hare*), which celebrates the Hindu divinities Krishna and Rama, testifies to this.

Led Zeppelin played a snippet of "The Song Remains the Same" during "Dazed and Confused" at the concert at Western Springs Stadium in Auckland on February 25, 1972, toward the end of their Australasian tour. But it was on their Japanese tour in October (in other words, five months ahead of the release of the album) that the quartet first performed it in its entirety, Robert Plant introducing it variously as "Zep," "The Overture," and "The Campaign." It soon became a staple of the Zeppelin repertoire—Jimmy Page's double-necked Gibson EDS-1275 always causing a sensation—particularly as an opener to the shows on the American tours of 1977, 1979, and 1980.

Song Remains the Same is also the title of the movie by Peter Clifton and Joe Massot, featuring the three concerts Led Zeppelin played at Madison Square Garden in New York in summer 1973, which was released in 1976. The album of the soundtrack, logically, also goes by the name *The Song Remains the Same.*

Production

"The Song Remains the Same" therefore had the daunting job of following the cataclysmic "When the Levee Breaks," the concluding track on the band's fourth album. The piece was worked up mostly at Stargroves using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. But prior to recording, Jimmy Page had also worked on it in his new home studio at Plumpton Place. And as with "Stairway to Heaven," he recorded the various sections of the piece onto audio cassette before assembling them. "I always had a cassette recorder around,"[4] he confirms. The original idea was to make it an instrumental, "an overture that led into 'The Rain Song,'" he explains. "But I guess Robert had different ideas. You know, 'This is pretty good, better get some lyrics quick!' [laughs]."[4]

Page, playing his 1965 Fender Electric XII, hooks us in from the very outset with a D note thrummed with an infectious energy, before plunging us into a thrilling maelstrom of guitars, with, at the forefront, two twelve-string tracks that answer him emphatically. And as the extraordinary rhythm section comes in, courtesy of Bonham and Jones, the piece effectively takes off,

Yes during the recording of "Fragile," a prog-rock track not unlike "The Song Remains the Same."

propelled by an irresistible burst of adrenaline, with Bonham taking the tempo almost to its limits. Page, an accomplished and innovative composer, came up with some new harmonies never heard before in Led Zeppelin's music. Some chords, it has to be said, are reminiscent of the introduction to "Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor," a composition he had written with Jim McCarty, which was recorded by the Yardbirds during the sessions for their *Little Games* album (1967). But it was most likely the influence of prog-rock bands like Yes, and undoubtedly the overture to *Tommy* by the Who, featuring Pete Townshend's sublime rhythm guitar work, that guided his writing and prompted him to set off in a new musical direction. Bonham delivers perhaps the only reminder of the classic Zeppelin sound with the unique and incomparable power of his drumming, his bandmate John Paul Jones providing a dazzling bass line, albeit one that is much more jazz rock than rock.

"The Song Remains the Same" stands as one of Jimmy Page's best guitar constructions, and he later acknowledged having battled hard to achieve the effect he was after: "I was so OCD then that, by the time it came for me to record my guitar parts, I was completely absorbed by what I was doing and the right parts just seem to come out."[87] His playing is quite an odd mix of flat-picking and rock, which, as Brad Tolinski rightly remarked, recalls that of the late country-rock guitarist Clarence White, formerly of the Byrds.

The piece moves on to luminous, cheerful harmonies that have a remarkable slickness to them. "There was a unity of spirit and a unity of direction of sound," Eddie Kramer later confirmed. "A lot of that had to do with Pagey and the fact he had a very clear idea of what he wanted."[86]

Page then comes in, most likely on his treasured Gibson Les Paul "Number One," with a riff he plays five times with masses of reverb (from 0:51), before launching into a magnificent solo with a country-rock flavor (this time definitely on his Les Paul). He gives the impression of being at the top of his game, displaying a perfect mastery of his instrument. Then, from a tempo of around 144 bpm, the piece slows to 133 bpm to allow Robert Plant to take up the lead vocal. This section was not part of the original plan: "I had all the beginning material together," Jimmy Page explains, "and Robert suggested that we break down into

Jimmy Page and Led Zeppelin on stage at Madison Square Garden, filmed for the rockumentary *The Song Remains the Same.*

half-time in the middle. After we figured out that we were going to break it down, the song came together in a day."[87] Plant's voice is upbeat and radiant. His singing style is more affected than normal, and his pitch seems to have been slightly modified. "I believe Jimmy later had Robert's vocals speeded up a bit,"[86] Eddie Kramer suggested. That is difficult to confirm, because if Page had changed the speed of the master tape, the piece would have moved into a different key (from D major), which is not the case...But it is true that the effect is unsettling, especially since his lead vocal seems to have been double-tracked using Automatic Double Tracking (ADT), making it even more prominent.

At the end of the first verse, the tempo reverts to its initial pace, and Jimmy launches into a new improvisation (from 2:35). He once said that his solos were spontaneous: "I'd warm up and then immediately record, and then I'd do the next one."[87] And after a second verse, this one sung at the quick tempo—with Plant's voice sounding less and less natural (listen from 3:23 onward)—Page moves into a prog-rock-style passage (between 3:37 and 4:09), with subtle arpeggio parts that he plays on his Fender Electric XII. Then the group reprises the initial motif, Jones's bass and Bonham's drums generating incredible drive. Next comes another fabulous solo by Page on his Gibson Les Paul (from 4:09), with a change of mood at 4:43, the sound becoming much more aggressive, in a middle register, probably achieved by centrally positioning his wah-wah pedal.

The number eventually ends with a final verse, Plant's voice as strange as ever, and it is he who concludes the song with a two-part harmonization.

"The Song Remains the Same" illustrates a musical approach that may have been disconcerting for die-hard fans, but it demonstrates the exceptional caliber of the four Brits who, album after album, reinvented themselves without making the slightest concession to the forces of conformity. This stands out as an exceptional performance by Jimmy Page, whose live performances of the piece are also astounding, as can be seen in the movie *The Song Remains the Same* (1976). We see him playing the whole of the song on the neck of his twelve-string Gibson EDS-1275 with surprising ease and nimbleness, and he manages on his own to blend all the multiple guitar tracks of the studio version into a completely unique adaptation. Extraordinary.

THE RAIN SONG

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 7:32

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic and electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, Mellotron, piano
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady)
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer (?), Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

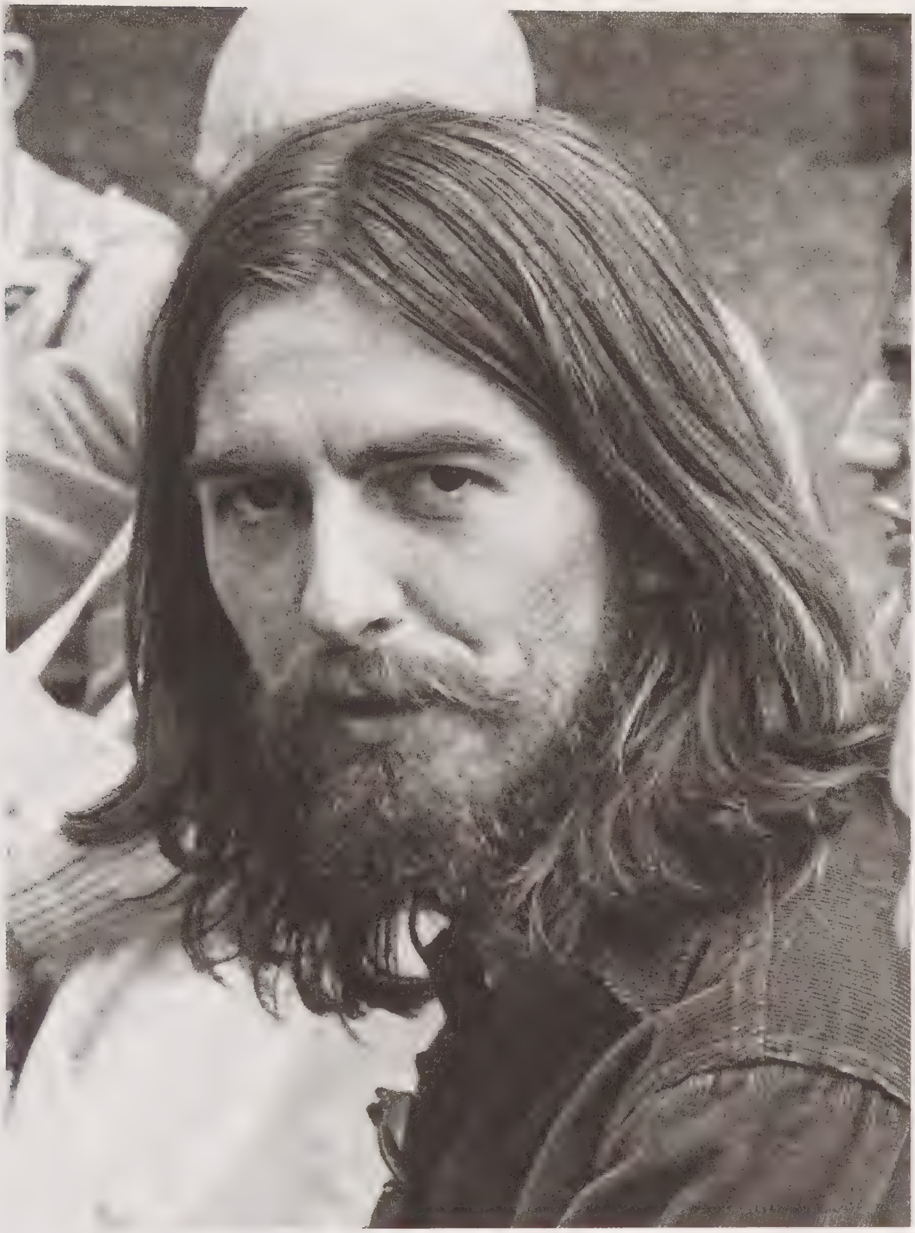
"The Rain Song" had the working title "Slush," a friendly nod to John Paul Jones and the sugary arrangements he had had to write in the early part of his career…

Genesis

It was in response to a comment made by George Harrison to John Bonham that Jimmy Page composed "The Rain Song": "The problem with you guys is that you never do ballads," the former Beatle reportedly told the Led Zeppelin drummer, which triggered something in the guitarist-songwriter's mind. "I said, 'I'll give him a ballad,' and I wrote 'Rain Song,' which appears on *Houses of the Holy*," he explains, adding: "In fact, you'll notice I even quote 'Something' in the song's first two chords."[9] He composed the song at his Elizabethan manor, Plumpton Place, in Sussex, which he had purchased not long before.

Robert Plant's lyrics on this number, in combination with Jimmy Page's music, are among the best on *Houses of the Holy*. "'The Rain Song' was just sort of a little infatuation I had," Plant told Bud Scoppa in *Rolling Stone*. "The next morning I'd scribble it out. If I had done it the day after, it would have been no good."[88]

Led Zeppelin's singer draws on the metaphor of the seasons here to express the changing emotions of love. With spring, love is born: *You are the sunlight in my growing*, he sings. For the narrator, this comes as a real metamorphosis: *So little warmth I've felt before*. With summer, amorous passion reaches its peak—a passion that seems to be other than physical (*Speak to me only with your eyes*), and capable of dispelling all dark feelings: *Flee from me, keepers of the gloom*, he commands. Then, after summer, it is suddenly winter, a winter that spells sadness and loneliness as darkness descends on the couple. The fourth and final verse is a kind of summary of the three previous ones: *These are the seasons of emotion/And like the wind, they rise and fall*. Robert Plant compares the fervor of love to a *torch we all must hold*. And all those questions we ask ourselves, those doubts we may have (about our own or our partner's feelings), are washed away by the rain: *Upon us all a little rain must fall/Just a little rain…*



Ex-Beatle George Harrison is thought to have prompted Jimmy Page's decision to compose the ballad "The Rain Song."

Interviewed by Austin Scaggs for *Rolling Stone*, Robert Plant confided that he considered "The Rain Song" one of his best two vocal performances (the second being "Another Tribe," recorded with his band the Strange Sensation, on their *Mighty Rearranger* album, 2005). "I'd reached a point where I knew that to get good I couldn't repeat myself. The high falsetto screams had become quite a kind of calling card. Nowadays, I learn new techniques on my trips to Mali and southern Morocco. I know about restraint and power and using my voice to insinuate."[89] His vocal prowess made for some memorable moments at Led Zeppelin's concerts. Jimmy Page and Robert Plant performed "The Rain Song" again for MTV *Unledded* in 1994, and on their tour of Japan and Australia in 1995–1996.

Production

Surely no one who listens to "The Rain Song" can fail to recognize Jimmy Page's exceptional talent as a composer and guitarist. He takes as his starting point the first two chords of "Something" by George Harrison before embarking on a superb harmonic progression fusing jazz, folk, and rock elements. He plays an acoustic guitar, probably his Harmony Sovereign, though some sources suggest it is his Martin D-28, a guitar he played for the first time on June 28, 1970, at Bath Festival. However, the open tuning is somewhat "exotic" (to use Eddie Kramer's description): D G C G C D. "The Rain Song" is a complex number. Page once said that he had had no trouble playing and performing it to the other band members on a single guitar. "What I wanted to achieve with

To get a better idea of the quality of Jimmy Page's guitar work and the richness of the harmonies he creates, you only need to look and listen to the glorious version recorded live with Robert Plant and the London Metropolitan Orchestra in 1994, on the DVD *Jimmy Page & Robert Plant—No Quarter-Unledded* (1995).

'The Rain Song' I felt was less evident from just performing the guitar part, so creating a demo was important."[87] So he worked out the various parts of the song on his own multitrack, and by the time he presented it to his bandmates, he already knew what he wanted them to do. And it was at Stargroves, using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, that together they got it down on tape with the help of the invaluable Eddie Kramer.

"The Rain Song" starts with Jimmy Page's acoustic guitar (positioned on the left), accompanied, from the second chord onward, by his Gibson Les Paul. The sound of the latter is slightly distorted by the amp, and seems to be colored with some very faint phasing. In the introductory bars, the guitar occupies the entire stereo field, with reverb from the EMT 140 stereo plate giving it that richness. As soon as the lead vocal comes in, it switches to the right channel. The singing is heralded, in fact, by a slide performed on a third guitar, enhanced by the resonance of the EMT (at 0:29). Robert Plant sings softly, with an authenticity that testifies to a new maturity. The reverb is very short, which has the effect of placing his voice at the front of the mix. With Page's two guitars, the first verse is immensely powerful, and effective in its simplicity. As soon as Plant finishes the last line of this verse, Page goes into an excellent descending riff on his Gibson, which he double-tracks to lend it more weight (at 1:08).

The following verse is entirely instrumental (from 1:36). The arrangements then become very much richer: John Paul Jones makes his entry with, needless to say, a lovely bass line, performed not on his Fender Jazz Bass but on a Hohner XK-250, a fretless bass, which enables him to bring out the acoustic quality of the piece even more. He can also be heard on a Steinway grand piano, which he plays with infinite delicacy. Eddie Kramer described his playing as sounding "like raindrops, or maybe teardrops."[86]

The Poignancy of the Mellotron

But it is on the Mellotron, especially, that Jones shines, accompanying the guitars with layers of strings and cello. The Mellotron is the synthesizer made forever famous by the introduction to "Strawberry Fields Forever" by the Beatles. The instrument is a very difficult one to master, as its response time is long and imprecise. Brian Jones was deft at it, as the Stones album *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, released in 1967, testifies. John Paul Jones, who could play multiple instruments and was a gifted arranger, seems to have had no difficulty recording it. But the idea of using it came from Jimmy Page. "My demo features a Mellotron and everything," he later said. "I didn't play it as well as John Paul Jones, of course."[87] In any event, the bassist-keyboardist has more of a prominent role to play here, something that made a big impression on Eddie Kramer. "This was definitely the album where Jonesy finally stepped out of the shadows," he said, adding that "that Mellotron he plays on this is what lifts the track to another emotional level."[86]

This instrumental part is also in a style that is entirely new to the Led Zeppelin universe: the distinctly prog-rock edge comes as a surprise. It is a world away from "Communication Breakdown." John Bonham makes his entrance just before the second verse, again on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle," but using brushes in the pure jazz tradition (from 3:36). His drumming is inventive and delicate, and far removed from his usual powerful pounding of the drumsticks. When Robert Plant resumes the lead vocal, the atmosphere is denser than in the previous verse, with the various instruments

"The Rain Song" was a chance for Jimmy Page to record a superb acoustic guitar part.

subtly enriching the texture of the sound. Plant sings in an emotionally charged voice and for the first time slips into falsetto for the last word of the verse (*time* at 4:25). Then the tension shifts up a notch, the sound becoming harder: Bonham apparently takes up his drumsticks to beat his drums with greater force (unless he is still using his brushes), Page performs a much more distorted rhythm pattern on his Les Paul, Jones puts more weight behind his piano chords, and Plant injects added power into his vocals, adopting a high-pitched rock voice (from 5:01).

Then, in the last verse, the music settles back to a quieter level, and the piece concludes with a superb guitar passage that Page performs as a solo on two acoustics and his Les Paul. The last chord struck on the electric guitar repeats itself in an echo that prolongs the end of the song by a few seconds (at 7:32).

Eddie Kramer later aptly described this new Led Zeppelin masterpiece: "I don't think they'd ever done a track so subtle before. That's the test of a great arranger: to do something so subtle yet which has such power. Quite beautiful."[86]

In "Over the Hills and Far Away," Robert Plant takes us back to the world of Tolkien. The song's title is taken from a poem by the author of *The Lord of the Rings*.

OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:06

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six- and twelve-string), electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, keyboards
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972 (Studio 1)
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: George Chkiantz (Olympic), Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady) (?)
Assistant Sound Engineer: Rod Thear (Olympic)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer (?), George Chkiantz

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

Squeak alert! As already came to light on the brilliant "Since I've Been Loving You," John Bonham has a bass drum pedal that squeaks! It is audible again on "Over the Hills and Far Away," where it makes itself heard in numerous places, notably between 3:03 and 3:06.

Genesis

Robert Plant dons his seven-league boots, as in European folklore, to roam the winding paths of the fantasy world born of J. R. R. Tolkien's fertile intellect and imagination. Indeed the title of this track is virtually the same as that of a poem by the author of *The Lord of the Rings* ("Over Old Hills and Far Away"), thought to have been written during the First World War, but only published in 1983, in the collection *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*. The short stories and poems brought together in this book are a crucial element of Tolkien's work, since they tell the beginning of the story of Valinor (in *The Silmarillion*) and of Middle-earth (in *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*), home of the elves. And the poem "Over Old Hills and Far Away" concludes with the lines: "Over old hills and far away / Where the harps of the Elvenfolk softly play." Note too that there is a traditional British song, dating back probably to the seventeenth century, also entitled "Over the Hills and Far Away." Several versions of it exist, the most famous of them appearing in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728).

Whether drawing on Tolkien's poetry or the British musical tradition, in "Over the Hills and Far Away," Robert Plant has penned a lyric about the complex relationship between a man and a woman, about disillusionment, and about frustration. In the first verse the narrator is hoping to win the affection of the woman he loves. He then contemplates his past, the love he wanted to give but that he never received. Hence his pain and solitude: *Many have I loved, and many times been bitten/Many times I've gazed along the open road*. In the end, all he is left with are his dreams—which he hopes will come true one day—dreams with *silver linings*. And the moral of this song-cum-fable: *Mellow is the man who knows what he's been missing*. In other words, experience prevails over everything, or at least helps to heal the wounds of hopeless romantics.

Jimmy Page began composing "Over the Hills and Far Away" during a stay at Bron-Yr-Aur cottage in Wales with Robert Plant in 1970, which explains the Celtic-folk atmosphere of the first part. This track was chosen as the A-side of the first single taken from *Houses of the Holy* (with "Dancing Days" as the B-side), released in the United States on May 24, 1973, and in several other countries including Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, Italy, and Japan. In the United States and Canada it got to number 51 and number 63, respectively. By the time it appeared on the charts, "Over the Hills and Far Away" already featured on the group's set list, starting with the eighth American tour (June 1972), and seems to have had its first airing at the Forum in Los Angeles on June 25. It continued to feature in the band's live shows until 1979. Jimmy Page unveiled a new version of it on his *Outrider* tour, then performed it again with Robert Plant on the 1995–1996 world tour.

Production

"Over the Hills and Far Away," originally entitled "Next One," then "Many Many Times," is one of the tracks Jimmy Page had prepared before going into the studio, on this occasion Olympic Sound Studios in London, where the group was based during April 1972. The song's opening bears an uncanny resemblance to that of "White Summer," an instrumental inspired by an old Irish folk song known as "She Moved through the Fair" (adapted for guitar by Davy Graham in 1963). In April 1967, while still a member of the Yardbirds, Jimmy Page recorded it accompanied only by Chris Karan on the tabla. It features on the band's last opus, *Little Games* (1967). But on "Over the Hills and Far Away," Page lends it a country-rock flavor that distances it from "White Summer," which had more of an Indian vibe. But there is no question that his performance on the acoustic guitar, his Harmony Sovereign H1260 in this case, is magnificent. It is worth highlighting the fluidity of his playing, which is equally skillful whether in Celtic, jazz, or rock mode. After introducing the theme, he doubles his first guitar with a twelve-string, probably his Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola (with the two guitars positioned in stereo). The twelve-string brings out the Celtic feel of the track, but once Robert Plant makes his

Left: Davy Graham, a key figure in the British folk revival, produced an adaptation of the traditional folk song "She Moved through the Fair," which was developed further in "Over the Hills and Far Away."

Opposite: Jimmy Page in concert at the Sports Arena in San Diego, with a Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola, the guitar he probably used for "Over the Hills and Far Away."

entrance (from 0:53), the song takes on more of a Californian folk-rock character. The Led Zeppelin vocalist sings in a soft voice with tangible emotion, with no reverb at all, so as to better highlight the delicacy of his performance. Jimmy Page ends the first verse with a different harmonic configuration, still on both acoustic guitars.

The piece then switches into a very catchy rock style led by the formidable Bonham/Jones duo, with an irresistible pulsing rhythm (from 1:27). Jimmy Page plays a superb acoustic guitar part, a combination of strumming and palm muting (most likely on his Giannini, still on the left side of the stereo picture), with Bonzo's hi-hat clinging to it like a shadow, giving the track a real locomotive groove. The guitarist strikes furious power chords, with added distortion, on his Gibson Les Paul Standard, and plays a rhythm guitar part (on the right stereo channel). Robert Plant, meanwhile, rediscovers the power of his—absolutely inimitable—rock voice, now sustained by fairly prominent reverb. And the Zeppelin machine is in motion. Two more verses follow, then Page performs several solo phrases on his Les Paul, with a fairly clean sound colored by short stereo reverb, which he harmonizes in places (for example at 2:25). But it is only after this short sequence that the solo proper gets going, this time with a slightly unusual tone, with the Gibson wrapped in a relatively short, but still quite noticeable echo (from 2:32). The guitar wanders about the stereo field like a boat adrift, and one cannot help but admire the quality of Page's guitar work, all the more so as he seems to be trying out a new approach. The end of his solo runs into a curious ascending passage in two-part harmony with quite a prog-rock feel, doubled by Jones's Jazz Bass and a second guitar (from 3:00), while the imperturbable Bonham continues unwaveringly with the same rhythm pattern.

Robert Plant is back on the vocals for two more verses, his voice double-tracked on the second (listen at 3:39). The piece then moves toward a rather peculiar coda in the typical way of Jimmy Page, who is always keen to explore new sounds. In fact, at 3:47, one can already make out some chords played on a keyboard by John Paul Jones, whose presence becomes more and more noticeable as the other instruments disappear in a rapid fade-out. From 4:10 the keyboard is the only audible instrument. The reverb probably issues from a Hohner Clavinet D6 (produced from 1971 onward). After a few bars the keyboard emerges from the reverb, accompanied by a kind of pedal steel guitar, apparently played on a Farfisa VIP-255 organ with a pitch pedal.

Eddie Kramer thinks he may be partly responsible for this surprise ending: "I can't remember exactly, but I think it was something I suggested at the mixing stage."[86] He explains that this fade-out and return was something he used to do with Jimi Hendrix sometimes.

THE CRUNGE

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:52

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitar
John Paul Jones: bass, keyboard
John Bonham: drums
Unidentified Musicians: spoken words at the end of the song

Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972 (Studio 1)
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972

Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972

Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: George Chkiantz (Olympic), Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady)
Assistant Sound Engineer: Rod Thear (Olympic)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

John Bonham's drum intro was sampled by the hip-hop producers Double Dee and Steinski on the song *"Lesson 3 (History of Hip Hop Mix)"* (1985).

Genesis

"The Crunge" is one of the songs for which all four members of Led Zeppelin take credit. It was conceived at a jam session at Mick Jagger's mansion Stargroves. "Bonzo started the groove, then Jonesy started playing that descending bass line and I just came in on the rhythm,"[9] Jimmy Page recalls. Little by little, this improvisation took shape and evolved into a piece colored by the influence of African American music—not the blues this time, but funk. No one, surely, could listen to "The Crunge" without being reminded of the James Brown of the early seventies, "Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine" or "Hot Pants (She Got to Use What She Got to Get What She Wants)," for instance.

The title "The Crunge" refers to a kind of dance invented for the occasion. Jimmy Page had even come up with the idea of printing the dance steps on the sleeve as a guide for listeners. That plan ended up being abandoned, but the title remained. Robert Plant's lyrics merely serve to reinforce the rhythm of the whole. The narrator says he wants to talk about a friend, but won't tell us his name, because *If I tell you, you won't come again*. He then goes on to sing about his girlfriend—a young woman who appears on the front page of the newspapers. *She's my baby, Lord, I want to make her mine*, Robert Plant sings. *She's the one that really makes me whirl and twirl*, he continues.

The Led Zeppelin singer also explicitly pays tribute to three black music legends: *Ain't gonna call me Mr. Pitiful* is a reference to "Mr. Pitiful," a composition by Steve Cropper and Otis Redding recorded by Redding in 1964 (which made it to number 10 on the Billboard R&B chart). And *I don't need no respect from nobody* is also a nod to "Respect" by Otis Redding, popularized by Aretha Franklin in 1967 (which made the number 1 spot). The closing lines of the track, *I'm just trying to find the bridge/Has anybody seen the bridge?* are a direct echo of the "Godfather of Soul"

James Brown, "Godfather of Soul," one of Robert Plant's two idols. His influence is apparent in the very funky "The Crunge."

who, in "Sex Machine," which we alluded to earlier, asks his organist (and co-composer) Bobby Byrd: *Bobby! Should I take 'em to the bridge?/Go ahead/ Take 'em on to the bridge/Should I take 'em to the bridge?* And Plant, not short of a sense of humor, concludes on a witty note, demanding, *Where's that confounded bridge?* well aware that this song does not actually feature a bridge…

"The Crunge" occupied the B-side of the second single taken from *Houses of the Holy*, with "D'yer Mak'er" as the A-side. Released on September 17, 1973, it peaked at number 20 on the Billboard charts, reaching number 20 in New Zealand as well, and number 24 in Canada. "The Crunge" has never been performed onstage, other than as part of "Dazed and Confused" on the 1972 American tour, and later, combined with

Opposite: Otis Redding (with Steve Cropper, New York, 1967), a source of inspiration for Robert Plant in this song.
Above: John Bonham, with a drumming style combining jazz-rock and funk for "The Crunge."

"Whole Lotta Love" at several gigs in 1975, notably the show in Inglewood, California (as part of a medley featuring "Whole Lotta Love"—"Lickin' Stick," "Sex Machine"—"The Crunge").

Production

George Chkiantz was at the console when the band recorded this new track at Olympic Studios in April 1972. As with previous songs, it is possible to detect a snippet of dialogue at the beginning, a barely audible conversation between Jimmy Page and Chkiantz: "One more straightaway, George?" the guitarist asks. "You like it?" the sound engineer replies. "Right." And "The Crunge" gets under way without further ado with John Bonham on the drums, playing a rather complicated rhythm pattern in 9/8, a sort of fusion of jazz rock and funk, which he masters with impressive ease, but that gained a reputation for being undanceable—hence the idea of printing the dance steps on the cover! John Paul Jones soon joins in with an excellent bass line that knits perfectly with Bonzo's beat, before Jimmy Page comes in playing a funky rhythm guitar part, as he himself recounts: "I played a Strat on that one—I wanted to get that tight James Brown feel. You have to listen closely, but you can hear me depressing a whammy bar at the end of each phrase."[4] It is a 1957 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst that he uses for this fabulous rhythm guitar work, inspired by the sound of Phelps "Catfish" Collins, James Brown's stellar guitarist. Actually, at the time Bonzo and Jones were in the studio laying the foundations for what would become "The Crunge," Page already had a funky riff he had worked out in his mind, and was merely waiting for the right opportunity to use it. This tallies with something Eddie Kramer said: "What you quickly learn about working with musicians of the calibre of Led Zeppelin is that nothing is ever brought to the recording that hasn't been worked over, in Jimmy Page's mind at least, to the Nth degree."[86]

As soon as Robert Plant comes in (at 0:19) with the lead vocal, the track takes a lighter turn; Plant has some

John Paul Jones and his trusty Fender Jazz Bass on "The Crunge." The synthesized brass parts are also by him.

fun with the lyrics, speaking "Black Country," the dialect of the English West Midlands west of Birmingham. "You know, 'Bloody hell, how you doin', 'you all right mate' sort of thing," as he once put it. "And [the lyric] just evolved then and there, when I was at the end of my tether. It just came out."[21] His vocal actually comes across in the way it is performed as more an improvisation than a carefully crafted construction.

Once again, John Paul Jones's contribution is not confined to just his bass. He also adds brass tones played on a synthesizer that unfortunately is not identified; it may possibly be the Mellotron, which is capable of producing brass tones, or perhaps the Farfisa VIP-255, which comes with a pedal for modulating the pitch (although it does not produce brass tones), while some sources suggest it is the EMS VCS3, which is unlikely. But one thing's for sure: the brass sounds are not a great effect and do not marry well with the funk vibe. Jones double-tracks them and harmonizes them in two tracks arranged in stereo (for example at 2:29).

The song ends with a parody of "Get Up (I Feel Like Being A) Sex Machine," sung by a teasing Robert Plant, to whom a voice—also unidentified—replies, to better replicate the James Brown version (at 3:09 and 3:14). Guesses abound as to the identity of the speaker of these spoken words: some maintain that it is Plant himself, adopting an American accent, while others claim it is Peter Grant or John Bonham...The mystery remains unsolved.

"The Crunge" is one of the songs that fans of the band tend to be least keen on, and it is true that it is not on the same level as the first three tracks on the album, even if it is plain to see that the band is having fun with it. John Paul Jones, however, regards it as one of his favorite numbers.

Stone Temple Pilots recorded an excellent grunge version of "Dancing Days" during their sessions for *Encomium: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin* (1995). A few years before, Bobby Brown used a sample of Page's guitar riff on "Humpin' Around" (number 1 on the R&B charts).

DANCING DAYS

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:40

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, keyboard
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972 (Studio 1)
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Island Studios, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: George Chkiantz (Olympic), Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady)
Assistant Sound Engineer: Rod Thear (Olympic)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer, George Chkiantz, Rod Thear

Scott Weiland, the late singer of the California band Stone Temple Pilots, produced a grunge version of "Dancing Days."

Genesis

Travel broadened the minds and liberated the already fertile imaginations of the artists. Banned from Singapore in February 1972, the members of Led Zeppelin took the opportunity to spend some time in India, specifically in Bombay. While they were there, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant heard a captivating tune that stuck in their minds, which they then adapted during the sessions at Stargroves, eventually turning it into one of the most idiosyncratic songs in their repertoire.

Robert Plant may have taken its title from the poem "Those Dancing Days Are Gone" by William Butler Yeats: "Come, let me sing into your ear; / Those dancing days are gone, / All that silk and satin gear; / Crouch upon a stone." The lyrics express a kind of idealism harking back to the sixties—in the first part of the song, at least. *I got my flower, I got my power/I got a woman who knows*...Harmony reigns, because of the power of the love the narrator feels: *I guess it's all in my heart/You'll be my only, my one and only*, Robert Plant sings. In the second part it becomes apparent that "Dancing Days" is not only nostalgic for the golden age of the sixties. It also touches on the subject of teenage love affairs: *You told your mama I'd get you home*. Teenage love affairs that only last one summer: *So dancing days are here again/As the summer evenings grow*.

"Dancing Days" is one of the tracks on *Houses of the Holy* that Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham were most pleased and satisfied with after recording. "By the time they started playing the track with me, it just had the most amazing vibe," reports sound engineer Eddie Kramer. "Just a glorious groove. They all enjoyed playing it so much. The way Bonzo played it was what really made it, though. He just found a way to make the rhythm bounce and snap. I'll never forget playing it back to them from the mobile truck and how excited they all were. It was a lovely sunny day, and there was Jimmy and Robert and a couple of others all

Sound check at Oude RAI in Amsterdam, on May 27, 1972, the month in which "Dancing Days" was recorded.

sort of linking arms and dancing on the lawn. I don't think even they could believe how good they sounded."[86]

"Dancing Days" was broadcast for the first time on March 23, 1973, three days before the release of *Houses of the Holy*, by the famous BBC DJ Emperor Rosko. The track was then chosen for the B-side of the single of "Over the Hills and Far Away," released on May 24, 1973. It featured on the band's 1972 American tour. Abandoned for several years, it later made a surprise reappearance on the set list for the 1977 US tour (in an acoustic medley with "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp"). Page and Plant also performed it on their 1995–1996 world tour.

Production

The production of "Dancing Days" was split among Olympic Studios, Stargroves, probably Island Studios, and Electric Lady Studios in New York. And the result shows that all that effort paid off: this first track on side two of the original vinyl record is a great success. However, "Dancing Days" is not as elaborately crafted as it may seem. Jimmy Page explains: "It sounds like the arrangement to that song was all sort of meticulously worked out, but it all just came out, and all I had to do was a few little drop-ins and the song was done."[87] All the same, it is hard to imagine that the interweaving of the numerous guitar tracks that make up the main riff was accomplished that simply. After all, the stunning riff, with which the song opens, is probably constructed around four or five tracks played by Page on his Gibson Les Paul, which was probably open-tuned in G (D G D G B D): the main riff is doubled, two guitars answer it in stereo, and there seems to be a fifth, slide-played guitar making a stealthy appearance. "It was pretty spontaneous,"[87] Page later commented. The result is a spellbinding piece, fairly dissonant, with an almost unsettling oriental tinge to it. "You're not in a

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

At the concert at the Seattle Center Coliseum on June 19, 1972, the public was so enthusiastic about "Dancing Days" that the band played it a second time!

Robert Plant and Jimmy Page on tour in 1995. Those "Dancing Days" are far from over.

comfort zone when you are listening to the opening riff of 'Dancing Days,'" he said, "but I think it feels natural in a dark way. It's 'Dancing Days,' but it's not disco! It's not the norm."[87] Jimmy Page, an inspired musician, was permanently on the lookout for new sounds, always searching for fresh experiences. In "Dancing Days" he opens the door to unexplored territories, to the influence of the Orient.

He is supported, right from the opening bars, by the solid combined efforts of John Paul Jones and John Bonham. Jones underpins Page's riff with his Jazz Bass, which he plays in a loose, syncopated style, and Bonzo beats out an unwavering rhythm, with his hi-hat half open, and his bass drum pedal as squeaky as ever (!), in a rolling repeat of the groove. If, on this album, Jimmy Page wanted to try out a new guitar approach, Robert Plant shared the same preoccupation as far as his singing is concerned. He moves away from his usual performing style, allowing himself to be likewise influenced by Asian cultures. Thus, on "Dancing Days," his lead vocal is rather neutral, almost detached, and nothing like his more flamboyant rock or blues performances. His vocal is enhanced with a short delay, which adds to the almost impersonal tone he adopts.

In the second verse, Page embarks on some solo phrases, which he plays with a slide (from 0:56 onward). The recording of this guitar, which took place in Studio 1 at Olympic Studios, has stuck in his memory. "I stationed myself in the control room," he recalls, "and fed my lead out to an amp in the studio. I wanted it really loud, and you could get the ambience of the whole room. I just roared. I hadn't even worked out what the part was going to be. But I guess I was so on top of my playing that I could just sort of do that."[87] John Paul Jones comes in on the next verse with what sounds like an organ, a tone probably produced by the Farfisa VIP-255, which he modulates with a pitch pedal (from 1:38 onward). On the last chorus, Robert Plant abandons his neutral style, adopting a more familiar rock timbre (at 2:36). After another slide solo by Page, which he harmonizes on two tracks (between 3:00 and 3:12), the song draws to a

close with a repeat of the riff, ending cleanly and neatly on a final chord.

"Dancing Days" is another example of Jimmy Page's creative force, a jubilant song, as he himself said, which marked the beginnings of a new approach for the group, one that would find expression in their next album, *Physical Graffiti.*

It took John Bonham some time to fully master the particular rhythm of reggae.

D'YER MAK'ER

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:18

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, piano
John Bonham: drums, percussion (?)
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady)
Assistant Sound Engineer: (?)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Evidence of the influence of doo-wop on "D'yer Mak'er": on the inner sleeve of the album, below the lyrics, we find the words *Whatever happened to Rosie and the Originals?* Rosie and the Originals were a doo-wop group that had their moment of glory in 1960 with the hit "Angel Baby."

Genesis

This second track on side two of the *Houses of the Holy* LP also derived from a jam session at the Stargroves mansion, and once again, the original idea came from John Bonham, with a doo-wop beat that very soon veered toward the Caribbean. So the Led Zeppelin four made a curious and unexpected venture into reggae, a musical style that was still little known in Europe and the United States in 1972. Besides the music itself, the title of this track confirms that one island in particular had caught their attention: rather than being yet another esoteric reference, which is how many fans interpreted it, "D'yer Mak'er" is simply a play on the way *Jamaica*, is pronounced by the English. If there is a hidden meaning, it can be found in an old British joke, which goes: "My wife went on vacation to the West Indies." "Jamaica?" (taken as meaning "Did you make her [go]?") "No, she went of her own accord." Jimmy Page was surprised to find so many people had trouble understanding the title: "I didn't expect people not to get it. I thought it was pretty obvious."[37]

Robert Plant's lyrics similarly come with a good dose of humor and are not meant to be taken literally. The narrator, apparently madly in love, does not want his girlfriend to go away, and has shed many tears. *When I read the letter you wrote me, it made me mad mad mad/ When I read the news that it told me, it made me sad sad sad*, he sings.

This sad love song set to a Jamaican rhythm features on the A-side of the second single taken from *Houses of the Holy* (with "The Crunge" as the B-side), which was released in the United States, France, and various other countries (Australia, New Zealand, West Germany, Japan...) on September 17, 1973. The song peaked at number 20 on the Billboard charts on December 29. It was also picked as the A-side of the promotional single produced for the United Kingdom (and South Africa). All the same, Jimmy Page, Robert

PAISTE

Sly & Robbie, the hottest rhythm section to come out of Jamaica, also covered "D'yer Mak'er."

COVERS

Sheryl Crow performed "D'yer Mak'er" for the album *Encomium: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin* (1995). Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, a.k.a Sly & Robbie—the two reggae legends—likewise performed a sensational cover version on the excellent LP *The Rhythm Remains the Same: Sly & Robbie Greets Led Zeppelin*, released in 2005.

Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham never played it onstage.

Production

"D'yer Mak'er" opens with an excellent drum fill by John Bonham. The sound is heavy (suggesting the tape has been slowed down slightly) and live, masterfully recorded by Eddie Kramer in the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio. Three mics were apparently sufficient to capture the incredible sound: two Neumann U87s above the Ludwig and an AKG D12 in front of the bass drum. "Bonzo sounded that way because he hit the drums harder than anyone I ever met," Kramer once said. "He had this bricklayer's ability to bang the drum immensely hard. Yet he had a very light touch. In many ways, he was the key of Led Zeppelin."[3] This introduction was perhaps partly inspired by the remarkable drum part in "Foolish Fool," a track by Dee Dee Warwick released in 1969. Bonzo then launches into a reggae rhythm, the first ever time the band ventured into this style of music. According to John Paul Jones, Bonham was furious that he found it so hard to capture the subtleties of the genre. Yet, listening to the result, his accompaniment is a success, a cross between reggae and rock, still with that incomparable personal touch. He also makes use of a percussion instrument, most likely a shekere, to emphasize every second and fourth beat. Jones, for his part, performs a very good bass line and, although he would later admit to not being very keen on "D'yer Mak'er," he gives the impression of having adapted effortlessly to the Jamaican style. He probably employs palm muting, as his Jazz Bass has a muffled, percussive sound. But it is also possible that he inserted a piece of felt level with the bridge to obtain this effect. And as on the rest of the album, he also performs the keyboard parts, in this case on an acoustic piano (positioned on the left of the stereo picture), which follow the exact same rhythmic pattern as the percussion.

An exotic track that reveals Robert Plant's penchant for doo-wop.

Jimmy Page, meanwhile, performs an excellent accompaniment on his Gibson Les Paul. His playing is a compelling combination of muted guitar, licks, and chords, which works particularly well. After the second bridge he plays a rather understated solo with quite a clean sound colored by short reverb (from 2:36 onward, in the left-hand channel). In terms of vocals, Robert Plant adopts a "classic" singing style without attempting new vocal effects, in contrast to the preceding tracks. His singing is laid-back, an amalgam of reggae and doo-wop, and he seems to take genuine pleasure in it. He doubles himself at the end of each line in each bridge (for example at 2:17), reverting to his powerful rock voice at the start of each verse.

The tune of "D'yer Mak'er" is not unlike that of "Forgive Them Lord," a track by the Jamaican singer B. B. Seaton, recorded in 1971 (released by Upset Records in 1972), and the overall character of the piece seems to have been influenced by Ricky Nelson's "Poor Little Fool," a 1958 rockabilly number with a beat already close to reggae and ska. Yet, as always, Led Zeppelin transcended these influences to produce a unique work of their own.

Finally, in the coda, Robert Plant's vocal improvisations are answered by a voice rather mysteriously whispering the word *fire*: a private joke, perhaps, or a specific unidentified reference. It may well be Robert Plant himself who breathes this word, which is heard three times (at 3:57, 4:03, and 4:15).

"D'yer Mak'er" elicited a mixed reaction on its release. "A real love it or hate it track, which I still love,"[86] Eddie Kramer declared. Obviously this gentle pop song marks a distinct change in style compared to "Whole Lotta Love" or to "Immigrant Song." But this eclecticism demonstrates once again that these four exceptional musicians were determined to depart from the well-trodden paths, and that they had plenty of surprise material in reserve for their albums to come.

NO QUARTER

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:52

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass pedal (?), EMS VCS3, keyboards
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Island Studios, London: December 1971 (Studio 2)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972 (Studio 1) (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Andy Johns (Island), George Chkiantz (Olympic)
Assistant Sound Engineer: Bob Potter (Island)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, George Chkiantz, Andy Johns (Island), Phill Brown (Island)

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"No Quarter" gave its name to the album celebrating the reunion of Jimmy Page and Robert Plant: *No Quarter: Jimmy Page and Robert Plant Unledded* (1994). John Paul Jones was not too pleased at this choice of name, as Page and Plant had assured him that they had only recorded new songs. In 1995, at the ceremony in which Led Zeppelin was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Jones said with wry humor, "Thank you, my friends, for finally remembering my phone number."

Genesis

After two songs that were somewhat atypical of their repertoire, the Led Zeppelin four were back on top form. Yet "No Quarter" was by no means a return to past years—either to blues rock or hard rock. Rather, it marked an explosion onto the forefront of the progressive-rock scene, reminiscent of the King Crimson of *In the Court of the Crimson King* (1969), or even the Yes of *Fragile* (1971).

The origins of "No Quarter" can be traced back to John Paul Jones. He had devised and recorded the chord progression, and even written some rough arrangements in his home studio before playing the tape to the other band members during the sessions for the fourth album at Headley Grange. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Bonham liked the mood of Jones's composition, which at the time had a very fast rhythm, but they decided to put it aside and rework it for the next album instead.

Robert Plant is known to have written the lyrics to this track during the session at Island Studios, London, on December 3, 1971. *No quarter*, meaning "showing no mercy," is a phrase used by pirates out on the high seas when they spotted a ship they wanted to raid. It was also used, in a very different context, by soldiers of the British Crown when they encountered patriots during the American Revolution (1775–1783). "No quarter," or in other words "no prisoners"...Robert Plant took this expression, this irrevocable command, as the basis around which he wove an epic tale set in the lands of the north, where *the winds of Thor* (in Norse mythology, the god of thunder) *are blowing cold*. The warriors, that is the Vikings, arrive *wearing steel that's bright and true*. They are *walking side by side with death* and cause *the dogs of doom* to howl.

Robert Plant may have been once again inspired by the fantasy novels of Tolkien, and specifically a crucial episode in the Last Alliance mentioned in *The Lord of*

"No Quarter," one of Led Zeppelin's last major compositions, owes much to John Paul Jones.

the Rings and *The Silmarillion*; it concerns the campaign waged by the dark lord Sauron against the peoples of Middle-earth, a campaign that led to the fall of the latter and the death of Elendil, the king of men. If this is indeed Plant's source of inspiration, *the path where no one goes* is probably a reference to Tolkien's "Paths of the Dead," the path taken by the Men of the Mountains who, having pledged to fight alongside Gondor, were overcome by fear of Sauron (and corrupted by him) and ended up fleeing. Indeed, in chapter 2 of *The Return of the King*, Tolkien writes: "From the North shall he come, need shall drive him: he shall pass the Door to the Paths of the Dead."

The number featured regularly at Led Zeppelin gigs from 1973 onward. In fact it seems the quartet played it at every show up until Knebworth Festival in August 1979. Robert Plant performed it again on his *Manic Nirvana* tour in 1990, then with Jimmy Page for MTV *Unledded*. John Paul Jones later performed a superb instrumental version of it on his 1999 tour.

Production

"No Quarter" marks one of the high points in the career of John Paul Jones, whose incomparable talents are often eclipsed by those of his three colleagues, or that go unnoticed due to his more reserved personality. *Houses of the Holy* can be seen as the album in which he revealed himself, the one that highlights his skills as an arranger, composer, and multi-instrumentalist. He had already proved himself in the past as an exceptional musician, but on this album, Jimmy Page offers him greater scope for creativity, and it is fair to say he seizes the opportunity with both hands! Eddie Kramer, who obviously has huge respect for him, expressed his admiration: "It wasn't just his brilliance as a keyboard player or even a writer, it was also the subtlety of his

COVERS

The metal band Tool recorded an incredible version of "No Quarter" for their album *Salival* (2000). Sly & Robbie also performed a peculiar adaptation of it in 2005 on *The Rhythm Remains the Same: Sly & Robbie Greets Led Zeppelin*. And Ben Harper gave a very good live rendition of it in 2011.

arrangements, and the economy of notes that made this track such a powerful statement. Genius."[86] As it happens, Eddie Kramer was not involved in the recording of the track, as the job fell to Andy Johns at Island Studios in December 1971, before he was dropped from the album. The various vocal, guitar, and effects overdubs would have been added at Olympic Studios and Electric Lady Studios.

"No Quarter" begins with an electric piano part. It has a dreamlike, almost hypnotic atmosphere, but a subtle tension oozes from between the notes. John Paul Jones plays his Electra-piano, probably connected to an EMS VCS3, making use of its low frequency oscillators to produce that rather aquatic sound. The VCS3 synthesizer was used by Pink Floyd too around the same time, in early 1972, on their album *Obscured by Clouds*; they went on to popularize it, one year later, with *The Dark Side of the Moon*. We do not know for sure which model Jones used: it may have been the "Putney," or possibly the "Synthi A," also known as the "Portabella." Whatever the case may be, the atmosphere created on this intro is truly haunting, despite a significant analog hiss. "It was such a great take by John Paul Jones, I wasn't about to let a little hiss stop me from using it," Jimmy Page later commented. "In some ways, it adds to the ambience of the time and place."[87] The keyboard is accompanied by bass tones, also produced by Jones. He appears to be using a bass pedal, as the playing that can be heard on the track is not from an electric bass guitar. It may have been his Fender Pedal Bass, the same one that he used in concert for the acoustic numbers, or otherwise the VCS3, which can also generate bass tones. Another hypothesis put forward by some is that it was the Moog Taurus, but this model only came out in 1976.

John Bonham comes in on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" at 0:47, his playing both subtle and heavy, which adds to the progressive-rock vibe that makes itself felt from the very first notes of the track. He plays a beat that is closer to jazz rock than rock. One also cannot help but admire the (apparent) ease with which he adapts to rhythms far removed from his personal style, but Bonham is an amazing drummer of exceptional intelligence and instinct. Jimmy Page makes his entrance as well, at the same time as the drums, on his Gibson Les Paul, striking clean-sounding, light-filled chords with heaps of reverb. The bass, now slightly distorted, accompanies the riff performed by Page on a second guitar, also with a distorted sound (starting at 1:02). This distortion, Andy Johns apparently told Martin Popoff, had been obtained using a technique similar to that used on "Black Dog," with the guitar connected to the console via a DI box, and the signal processed by two serially connected Urei 1176 Universal compressors. [91]

The Phasing Effect

After a return to a meditative ambiance, during which all we hear are the ethereal tones of John Paul Jones's Electra-piano, Robert Plant's voice suddenly bursts forth, as if from a void, its sound processed by a kind of very pronounced phasing (from 1:46 onward). The effect adds considerably to the unreal, menacing atmosphere of the song, and Plant delivers his lyrics in rather somber tones. The effect of his performance, supported by the bass, is a surprising one, especially as Jimmy Page slowed down the speed of the track during mixing—just as he had on "When the Levee Breaks" on the fourth album. He explains, "I dropped the whole song a quarter tone because it made the track sound so

Jimmy Page and his Les Paul: in search of the solo extraordinaire.

much thicker and more intense."[4] The first verse is followed by a repeat of the riff, with Page's guitar still just as distorted, and Bonham powerful and heavy on the drums. Next comes another meditative passage in which, on top of the Electra-piano and the bass, Jones improvises a glorious jazz-tinged piano part, probably on the Steinway grand piano. His talent for arrangement shines through, and his notes are economically distilled so that they stand out better against the reverb from the EMT 140 plate. The drums come in at 3:52 and, a few bars later, Jimmy Page sets off on an excellent solo on his Gibson, with the sound highly compressed and the distortion barely noticeable. "With the piano being the way it is, the last thing I wanted to do was play a jazz homage," he later explained. "It would've been too obvious. I wanted to show the guitarist hasn't gone to sleep—he's thinking about presenting the composition in a different way, using different colors and tones and figures that are…spritely. It's like water nymphs or something coming through."[87] And to bring his distinctly Tolkienesque vision to life, Page alternates several solo tracks. The first, played clean, is answered by a second guitar, this one distorted by the console's preamplifier. The second guitar then rounds off the sequence, which in places is harmonized in two parts and supported by guitars drenched in reverb and effects from the VCS3 (between 3:57 and 4:43). Great art!

Robert Plant then resumes his lead vocal, his voice still colored by the phasing, and ends the track with a frenzied coda, backed by his fellow band members, who provide a brilliant accompaniment. He improvises, employing a powerful, high-pitched rock voice that is distorted by the effects, the sound dancing around like crazy in the stereo field. The track ends with a relatively long fade-out.

"No Quarter" is unquestionably one of the most successful tracks on the album, and reinforces the predominantly prog-rock feel of this fifth opus. Led Zeppelin's perfect mastery of their instruments enabled them, with almost disconcerting ease, to make forays into genres they had never before attempted.

John Paul Jones, the mastermind behind "No Quarter." It was largely at his initiative that the quartet made a move toward progressive rock.

The Beastie Boys sampled "The Ocean" on "She's Crafty" (on the *Licensed to Ill* album, 1986). In fact they also sampled two other Led Zeppelin numbers on the same album: "When the Levee Breaks" on "Rhymin' & Stealin'," and "Custard Pie" on "Slow and Low."

THE OCEAN

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:16

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: guitars, backing vocals
John Paul Jones: bass, backing vocals
John Bonham: drums, backing vocals
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972 (Studio 1)
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: May 1972 (?)
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972 (?)
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: George Chkiantz (Olympic), Eddie Kramer (Stargroves, Electric Lady) (?)
Assistant Sound Engineer: Rod Thear (Olympic)
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Eddie Kramer (?), George Chkiantz (?), Keith Harwood

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

It is possible to make out the sound of a telephone ringing during Jimmy Page's solo, at 1:38 and 1:41. You have to listen hard, as it is almost drowned out by all the instruments that, needless to say, are not exactly being played *pianissimo*.

Genesis

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham round off *Houses of the Holy* with a love song dedicated not to the women with whom the four musicians shared their lives, but mainly to their fan base, the people who had followed them from their earliest days. When the narrator tells us *I can hear the ocean's roar*, it is the ocean of fans in the audience that he is referring to. And he takes great pleasure in performing to them: *singing about the good things and the sun that lights the day* is the exciting mission Robert Plant has set himself.

The last verse, by contrast, is much more intimate, much more personal than the others. *Used to sing about the mountains, but the mountains washed away/Now I'm singing all my songs to the girl who won my heart.* There is no hidden meaning here. The heroine that Plant now worships above all else is only three years old: it is his daughter Carmen. The words are perhaps meant as a loving gesture toward his elder child, at a time when Maureen had just given birth to a son, Karac Plant (on April 20, 1972).

"The Ocean" was first performed live on the American tour in June 1972, starting with the show at the Seattle Center Coliseum on June 19. The following year it would be regularly played as an encore, before vanishing from the set lists. Robert Plant went on to adapt part of the track for "Tall Cool One" (on the *Now and Zen* album, 1988), and Jimmy Page quoted its riff when performing "Custard Pie" on the *Outrider* tour in 1988.

Production

After their multiple ventures into progressive, funk, and reggae territory, Led Zeppelin returned to the brand of music that had made their name as one of the genre-defining bands. Except that "The Ocean" is not "Black Dog" or "Whole Lotta Love." Although the track is constructed around a very good riff played by Jimmy

The ocean that Robert Plant refers to is a metaphor for the legions of fans who have followed the band since its inception.

Page on his Gibson Les Paul, the result is rather confused and disjointed, which makes it seem unfinished.

The song starts with John Bonham's voice: *We've done four already, but now we're steady and then they went, one...two...three...four...*Bonzo is actually referring to the four takes they have just recorded, but that didn't work out, as the combined 4/4 and 7/8 time signature made the positioning of the riff rather tricky. Jimmy Page once described the typical scenario that would end up with the drummer delivering this kind of comic introduction, as he had done previously on "Out on the Tiles" on *Led Zeppelin III*: "He would just get drunk and start singing things like what you hear in the beginning of 'The Ocean.'"[4]

So Page ran through the riff with Bonham to enable him to get the hang of the complicated structure. "But once he locked in," Eddie Kramer commented, "once he knew precisely what he had to play, then he would fuck with it and blow your mind, put a fill where you would not expect it. We'd all be laughing because it was just so insane."[86] When John Paul Jones comes in, accompanying Page's Gibson on his Jazz Bass, the trio rediscovers the powerful rock beat of their previous albums. Yet when Robert Plant launches into the lead vocal, his performance is not one of his best. He sings, as usual, in a high register, but his voice is not as assured as it was previously. He is trying out a different form of expression, a tense, more affected voice, but one that ultimately lacks the kind of power needed for a track of this kind. This is not the case, though, in his live performances, where he rediscovers the vocal strength that is lacking on the record.

In the second verse, the ends of the first three lines are accompanied, on backing vocals, by some very pop-style *ooh oohs* (listen at 1:16) that seem rather out of place in the context of the song. These appear to be sung by the four band members. Then Jimmy Page delivers a very good dynamic rock-style solo on his Les Paul before moving on to a harmonized rhythm guitar part performed on three guitars positioned in stereo (starting at 1:54). Then comes a passage in which Robert Plant is singing a cappella. This section (from 2:14 onward) interrupts the flow of the song, and the reasons for including it are far from clear. Plant performs a mixture of *na na*

Right: Led Zeppelin at the Nippon Bukodan on October 2, 1972.

Following spread: Robert Plant and Jimmy Page in the spotlight. The Led Zeppelin passion for rock 'n' roll was as strong as ever on *Houses of the Holy.*

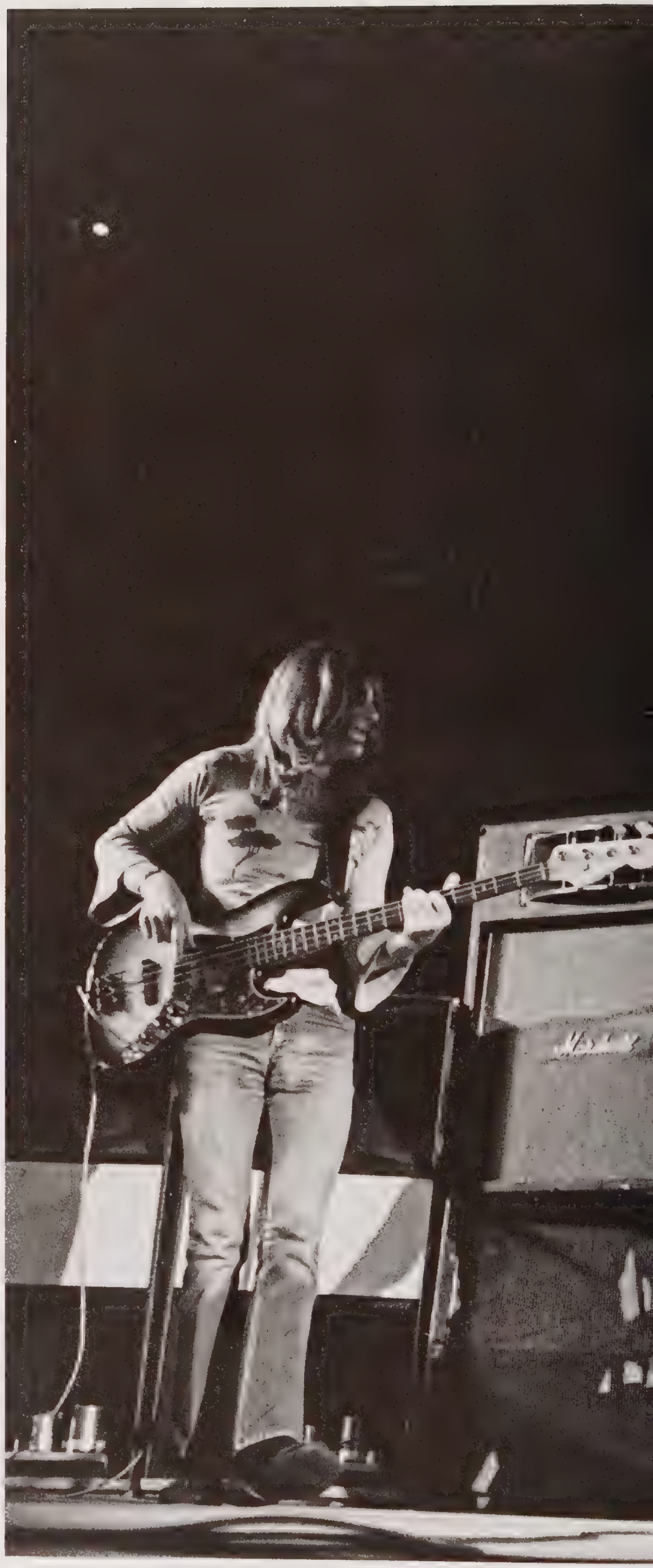
FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

According to the lyrics printed on the inner sleeve of *Houses of the Holy*, the last line of the first verse is *Got a date, I can't be late, for the high hopes hailla ball*. Some sharp-eared listeners heard something different, but just as enigmatic: *the hell high hella ball*; while others, meanwhile, thought they had heard *hellhound*, in reference to "*Hellhound on My Trail*" by Robert Johnson, the legendary bluesman from the Delta who, the story goes, sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his talent...

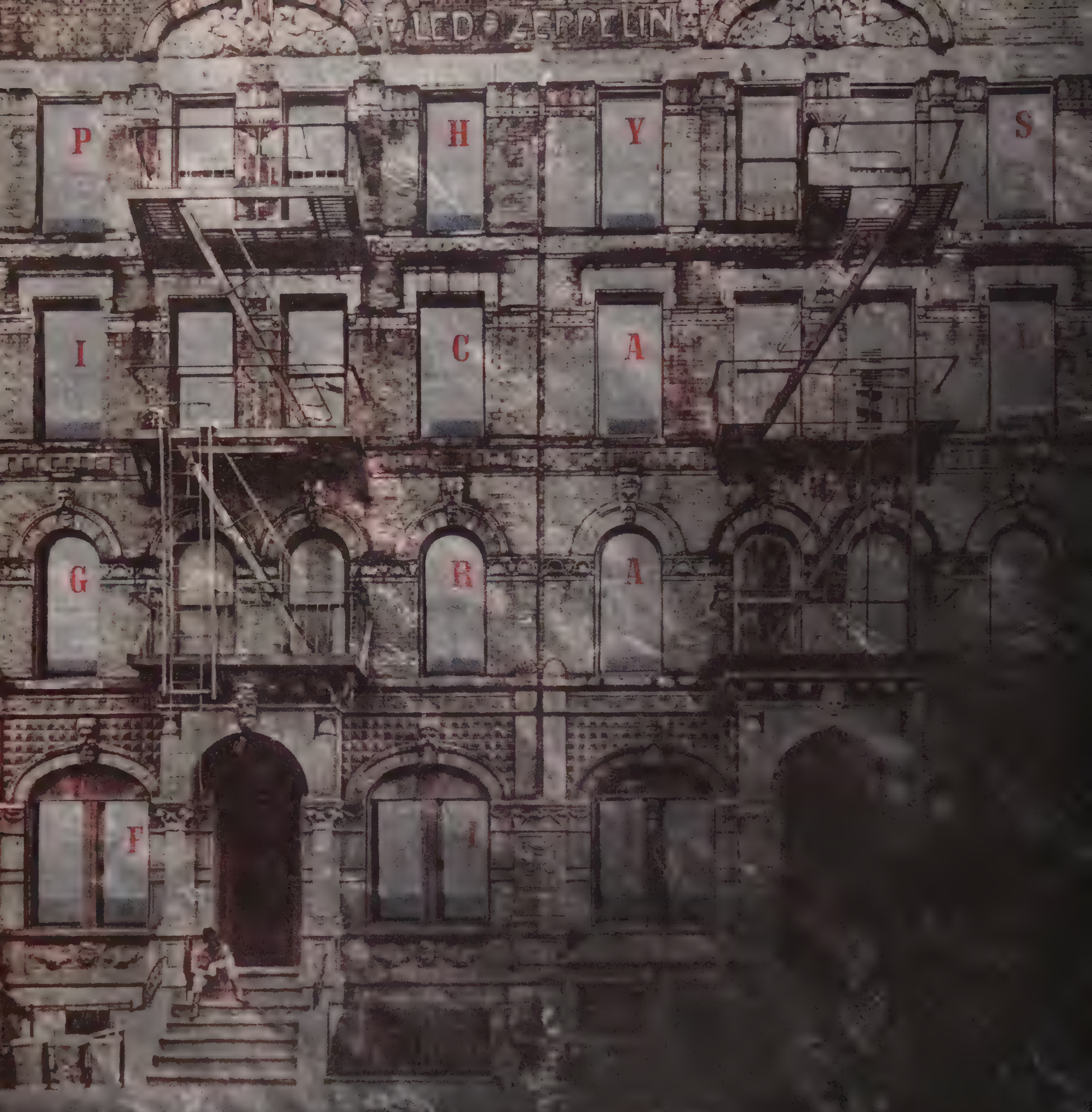
nas and *la la las*, which he harmonizes in two, then in three parts, but the result is unconvincing and merely comes across as a bit quirky.

Finally, after a last verse and a return to the riff, the mood of the piece changes, moving into a fifties rock 'n' roll sequence that bears no relation to what went before it (from 3:18). Page plays a heavily distorted rhythm guitar part (left channel), as well as a clean guitar solo (right channel), accompanied by a walking bass line played by Jones and a real steamroller of a drum part from Bonham on his Ludwig, which he pounds energetically. It is possible to (just about) make out some more backing vocals here, with *doo wop, be doo be doo be* repeated over and over until the end of the number, which finishes cleanly.

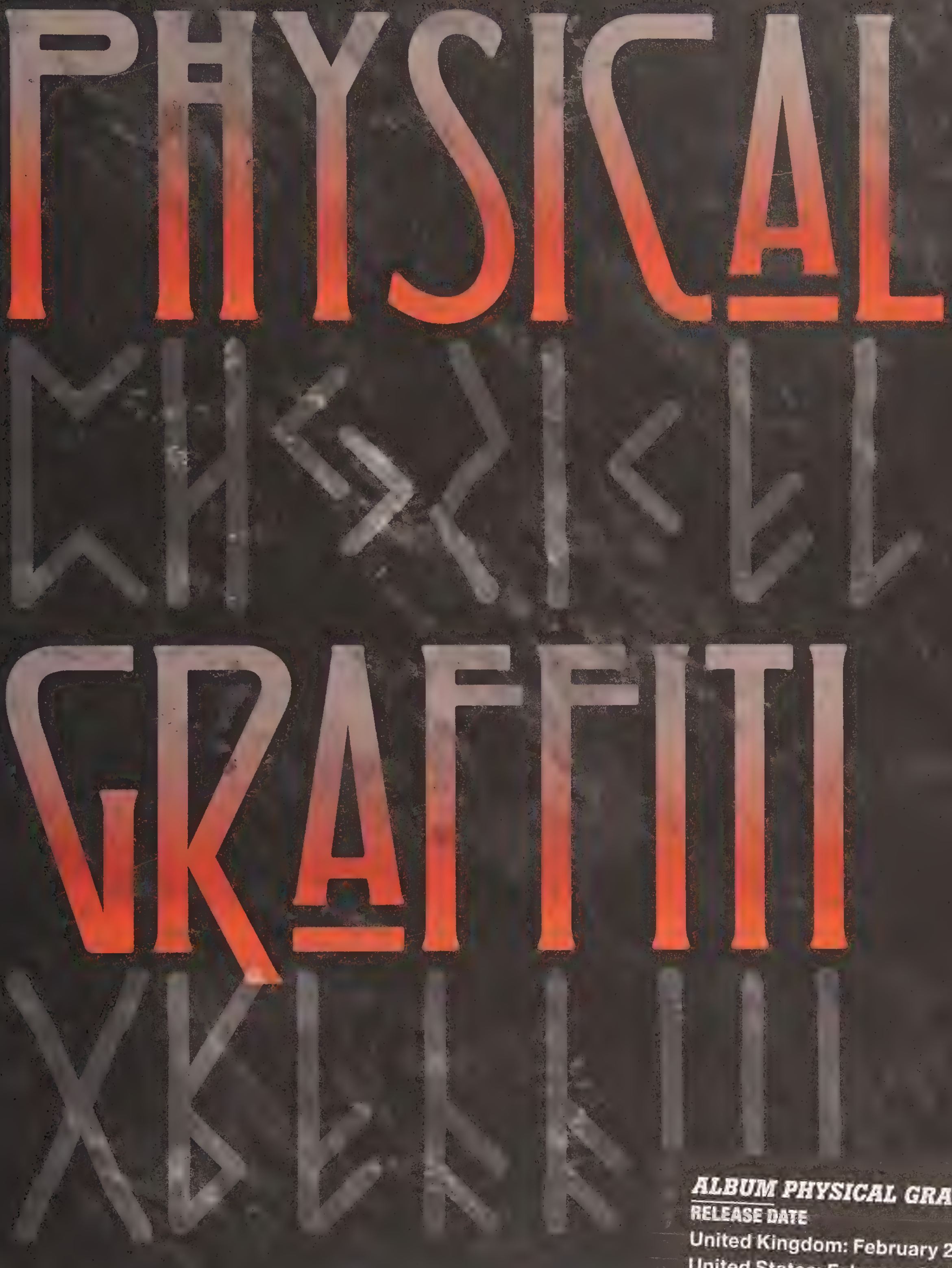
"The Ocean" is probably not the most successful track on the album, for in trying too hard to be original, the Zeppelin four have perhaps missed out on what could have been an excellent number. Certainly, it is one that really came into its own when played live. When this song is performed onstage, the harmonies on the a cappella part were sung by Bonzo alone.



Ludwig



1. CUSTARD PIE 2. THE ROVER 3. IN MY TIME OF DYING 4. HOUSES OF THE HOLY 5. TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT 6. KASHMIR 7. IN THE LIGHT 8. BRON-YR-AUR 9. DOWN BY THE SEASIDE 10. TEN YEARS GONE 11. NIGHT FLIGHT 12. THE WANTON SONG 13. BOOGIE WITH STU 14. BLACK COUNTRY WOMAN 15. SICK AGAIN OUTTAKES : TAKE ME HOME / SWAN SONG PART 1 / SWAN SONG PART 2



ALBUM PHYSICAL GRAFFITI

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: February 24, 1975
United States: February 24, 1975
Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER: SSK 89400 (UK); SSK 2-200 (US)
Number 1 (United Kingdom, United States, and Canada); Number 2 (France, Australia, Austria, and Spain)

Led Zeppelin perform for their French fans at the Palais des Sports in Saint-Ouen (Paris) on April 2, 1973, a highlight of their European tour ahead of the sessions for *Physical Graffiti*.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Physical Graffiti was the third album released on the Swan Song label. *Queen of the Night* (1974) by Maggie Bell should have been the first, but in the end it came out on the Atlantic label instead as Led Zeppelin had not settled on a name for their company in time! Next came Bad Company's self-titled debut (June 1974) and *Silk Torpedo* by the Pretty Things (November 1974). Others worth mentioning are *Suicide Sal* (1975) by Maggie Bell and *Get It* (1977) by Dave Edmunds.

LED ZEPPELIN: GONE WITH THE WIND

Even before the worldwide release of *Houses of the Holy*, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham set out on a lengthy tour that was to take them all over Europe and to the United States. It kicked off in the United Kingdom—with twenty-five dates between November 30, 1972, and January 30, 1973—then continued on the European continent from March 2 to April 2 (Scandinavia, West Germany, Austria, France). From May 4 to July 29, the quartet were in the United States for their ninth US tour, visiting some twenty states, from the American South to New England, via California and the Midwest. There is no shadow of a doubt that Led Zeppelin, right then, was at the zenith of their popularity. That was borne out by the 40,000 fans who, on May 4, turned up for the first US show in Atlanta, Georgia—the biggest event to hit the area since the premiere of *Gone with the Wind* (1939), in the words of their press agent Danny Goldberg. It was likewise borne out, the very next day, by the 56,800 who came to applaud the quartet in Tampa, Florida (setting a record for the largest number of people attending a concert of a single band [or artist], beating the previous record set by the Beatles in 1965 at Shea Stadium, with 55,600 tickets sold!); not to mention the three gigs played to a full house at Madison Square Garden in New York on July 27, 28, and 29 (filmed by the director Joe Massot, who was planning to make a documentary about the band).

The downside, however, was that exuberance could sometimes boil over into pandemonium as happened, for example, at the concert on March 26 at the Palais des Sports in Lyon, France. But most of all, it was the explosive trinity of drugs, alcohol, and groupies that often drove the four rock stars to the edge of the precipice. John Bonham, especially, was a prime example of rock 'n' roll excess, in terms of not only alcohol consumption but also the number of hotel rooms trashed or cars destroyed.

Back from Tour

Therefore, by the time they arrived back in jolly old England in August, Jimmy Page—who had received death threats, which had been taken seriously—Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham were utterly exhausted. Page decided to purchase a new property, the Tower House, a late-Victorian luxury mansion in Holland Park in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London, for the sum of £350,000. Plant, meanwhile, decided to buy a sheep farm, and Bonham continued to do good business with the car dealerships in his area. Jones, though, was showing worrying signs

SHELF SPACE.
TV

January 6, 1975. Fans in Boston wait to buy tickets to see their idols in concert.

ROCK STARS AMONG TEENYBOPPERS

On May 11, the day after the Swan Song launch party at the Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Bonham realized a teenage dream: they got to meet the King, Elvis Presley. They attended one of his concerts at the Inglewood Forum, and a meeting was arranged for after the show. They had a friendly chat, and the King charmed his three fans. As they were leaving, Elvis started singing "Love Me," after Plant revealed that he often played this song during sound checks for Led Zeppelin concerts.

The legendary Beatles concert at Shea Stadium in New York on August 15, 1965. The attendance record set at this gig would be beaten by Led Zeppelin in Tampa, Florida, in 1973.

John Paul Jones and his wife, Maureen, on board the *Starship*, the band's private Boeing, during the ninth American tour, July 30, 1973.

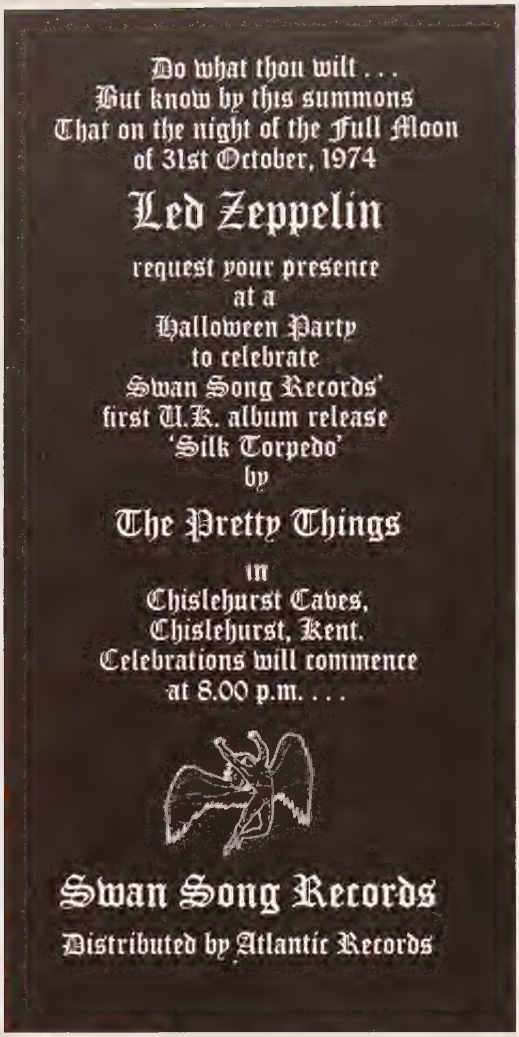
of nervous exhaustion. Of the four of them, he was the one who had struggled most with the grueling schedule of shows that Peter Grant had lined up for them. Was he perhaps considering quitting the band? Rumors started to fly when, in November, word got out that he would be in on the studio sessions for the second album of glam-rock singer Jobriath (*Creatures of the Street*, 1974), and all the more so when, in December, *Comin' Atcha*, Madeline Bell's fifth album, appeared in the record stores. (The tracks, co-written with Jones, had been recorded at Dormouse Studios in Crowborough, East Sussex, in February.) There were even reports that he had accepted the position of choirmaster at Winchester Cathedral (which turned out to be pure fantasy)…John Paul Jones would later confide in Dave Lewis that, quite simply: "I'd just had enough of touring."[11] Peter Grant remembers the conversation he had with Jones at that time: "I said, 'If you want to leave, well you've got to do what you've got to do.' But I told him to think about it. Meanwhile we invented a press story saying that he was 'overtaxed.' It was all kept low key."[7]

Swan Song

Concerts were out of the question for the time being. From autumn 1973, the members of Led Zeppelin and Peter Grant applied themselves to a new task, the creation of their own label, as others had done before them: the Beatles with Apple Records, Jefferson Airplane with Grunt Records, Deep Purple with Purple Records, the Rolling Stones with Rolling Stones Records, and Elton John with Rocket Records. The aim, of course, was to give themselves complete freedom, both artistically and financially. At the time, the band's manager was fairly annoyed (to put it mildly) with Atlantic, which had made an error in the pressings for *Led Zeppelin II*, with 100,000 copies affected. He considered himself to be in a strong bargaining position, in that sales of the records of the British outfit now accounted for something like 25 percent of the American company's turnover. With the five-year contract with Ahmet Ertegun due to expire on October 28, Peter Grant had little trouble negotiating a new deal: Led Zeppelin's output—and that of the artists Grant would sign—would be, or would continue to be,

LED ZEPPE

The four rock stars pose in front of their private airplane on July 24, 1973. That evening they would perform at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, in one of the last shows of their 1973 American tour.



Do what thou wilt . . .
But know by this summons
That on the night of the Full Moon
of 31st October, 1974

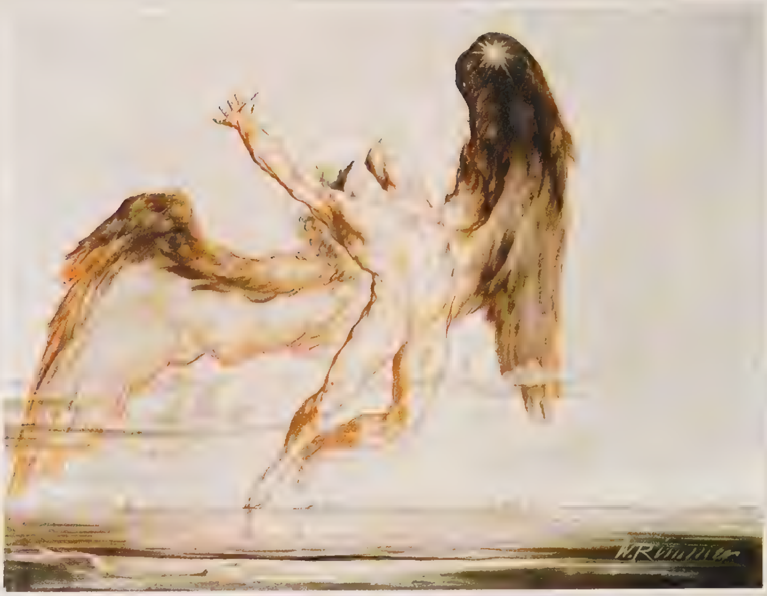
Led Zeppelin

request your presence
at a
Halloween Party
to celebrate
Swan Song Records'
first U.K. album release
'Silk Torpedo'
by

The Pretty Things

in
Chislehurst Caves,
Chislehurst, Kent.
Celebrations will commence
at 8.00 p.m. . . .

Swan Song Records
Distributed by Atlantic Records



Above: *Evening (The Fall of Day)*, the work by William Rimmer that inspired the Swan Song logo. **Left:** Invitation to the Swan Song Halloween party.

While it is said to have been inspired by the William Rimmer painting *Evening (The Fall of Day)*, the swan depicted on the Led Zeppelin label is seen by some as symbolizing a fallen angel, namely Lucifer. Not a very credible theory, however, except among a few Zeppelin commentators!

distributed worldwide by Atlantic, but from then on it would be issued under the band's own label.

And, by signing other artists, the new label was also taking on the job of helping musicians who were generally liked but who, until then, had not managed to secure the backing of a large company. It was very much in the same vein as the Beatles' company, Apple Records. They immediately began deliberating on a name. Jimmy Page came up with several suggestions: Slut, Slag, Eclipse, De Luxe, Stairway, Zeppelin Records, and Swan Song. It was the last of these that they eventually opted for, in January 1974. *Swan song* is a metaphorical expression referring to a final, sublime performance given by an artist just before death; the expression has its roots in a legend that recounts how a mute swan began singing a song of exquisite purity at the approach of death. "Swan Song" was also the title of an instrumental piece the guitarist was working on at the time…As for the logo, the inspiration came from a painting by William Rimmer (an American artist of French origin) entitled *Evening (The Fall of Day)*, 1869–1870, which depicts Apollo, the Greek god of singing, music, and poetry.

It was natural that Grant should oversee Swan Song. The position of vice president was awarded not to Richard Cole (to his disappointment) but, for the United States, to Danny Goldberg, mentioned above, who had been part of the Led Zeppelin entourage since the release of *Houses of the Holy* (and who would go on to be Nirvana's manager in the nineties) and, for the United Kingdom, to Abe Hoch, an American who had previously worked for Atlantic and Motown. The label celebrated its launch in the United States initially: first on May 7 at the Four Seasons Hotel in New York, and again on May 10 at the Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles (in the presence, notably, of the actor Groucho Marx, the singer Bryan Ferry, and the Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman). Later in the year, on the evening of Halloween (October 31), it was at Chislehurst Caves (in the London suburbs) that the members of Led Zeppelin, their teams, and their friends and family gathered to mark the start of this new venture.

The four band members and Peter Grant at the Swan Song launch party at the Four Seasons hotel in New York, May 7, 1974.

The Album: The Fifth Element

At the time Peter Grant and Led Zeppelin were marking the launch of Swan Song, the sixth album was at the point of completion. Assembled once again at Headley Grange in Hampshire, the four musicians exhibited an unparalleled creativity: eight tracks composed and/or arranged and cut in a matter of just a few weeks (although three of Jimmy Page's compositions had already been in a fairly advanced state, namely "Kashmir," "The Wanton Song," and "Sick Again," as they would become known). These, along with the remaining five tracks—"Trampled Under Foot," "In the Light," "In My Time of Dying," "Ten Years Gone," and "Custard Pie"—would prove too long for a vinyl LP. But this time, Jimmy Page did not want to omit any of them. "The idea of a double album wasn't one we'd had upfront," he says. "It kicked in while we were at Headley."[57] It made perfect sense, then, to add several songs they had already recorded for previous albums but subsequently shelved: "Bron-Yr-Aur," "Down by the Seaside," "Boogie with Stu," "Night Flight," "Houses of the Holy," "Black Country Woman," and "The Rover."

With *Physical Graffiti*, Led Zeppelin joined the ranks of the rock bands that had already gone for the double-album option in the past: Bob Dylan with *Blonde on Blonde* (1966), the Beatles with *The White Album* (1968), Jimi Hendrix with *Electric Ladyland* (1968), the Who with *Tommy* (1969), the Rolling Stones with *Exile on Main St.* (1972), and Yes with *Tales from Topographic Oceans* (1973).

The fifteen tracks assembled on the two LPs straddle the quartet's extensive range of musical styles. As pioneers of the genre, the band could hardly fail to put hard rock in pride of place on all four sides, as in "The Rover" and "Ten Years Gone," for example. Blues rock has its moment in "Custard Pie" and "In My Time of Dying," as does folk in "Bron-Yr-Aur," country blues in "Black Country Woman," soft rock in "Down by the Seaside," funk in "Trampled Under Foot," and even glam rock in "Sick Again." The Zeppelin four, with Ian Stewart on an old piano, even indulged in a tribute to some of legendary blues pianists in…"Boogie with Stu." As for "Kashmir," it stands, quite simply, as one of the crown jewels of the Led Zeppelin catalog, and indeed of the entire prog-rock scene.

Last but not least, the lyrics are some of the most poetic ever written by Robert Plant. Sometimes drawing

LED ZEPPELIN
"PHYSICAL GRAFFITI"

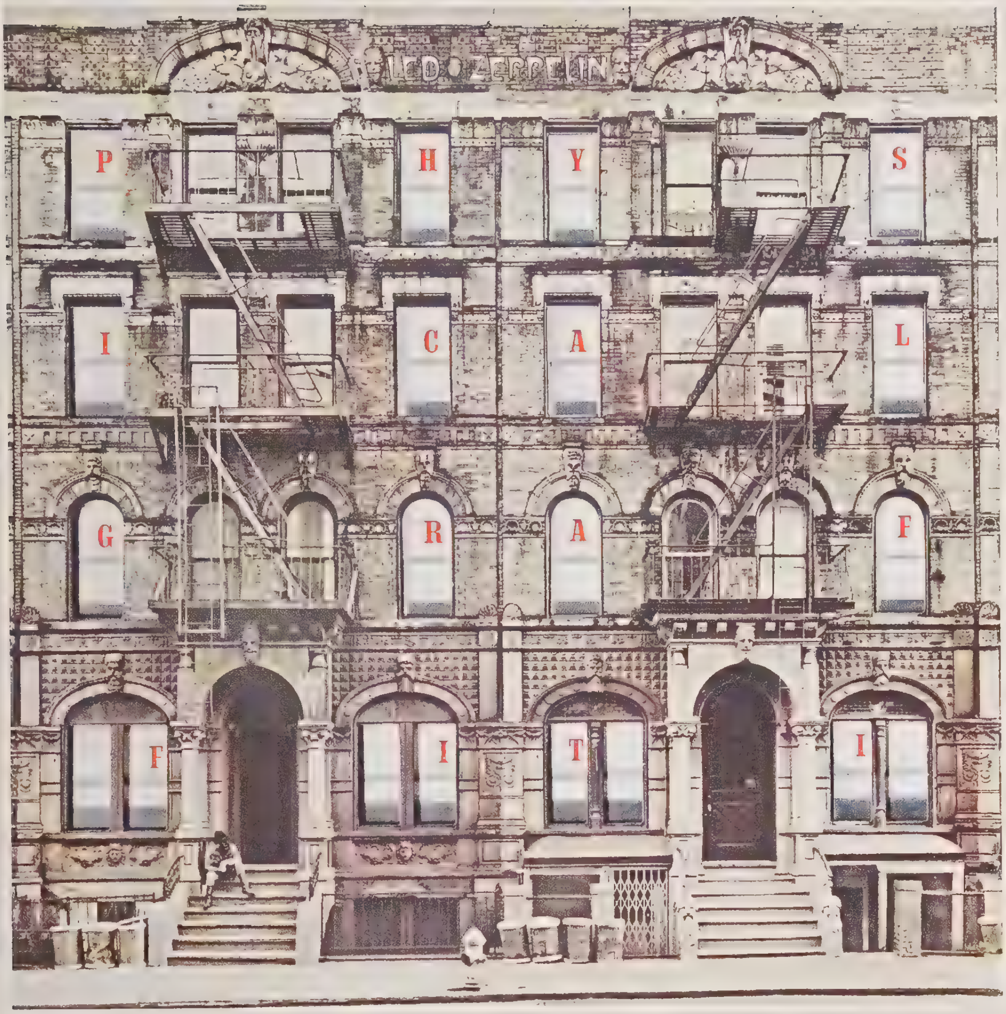
Robert Plant on the balcony of his room at the Hyatt House, a.k.a. "Riot House," in Los Angeles on May 10, 1974.

on his own experience (notably on "Ten Years Gone"), the band's front man surpasses himself in his evocation of love, travel, and exoticism. *I'm a traveler of both time and space*, he sings on "Kashmir."

Physical Graffiti, like *Four Symbols*, is another long and haunting journey of initiation. Jimmy Page was very pleased with the final result: "I look at *Physical Graffiti* as a document of the band in a working environment. […] Some people have said that parts of it are sloppy, but I think this album is really honest. It is a more personal album, and I think it allowed the listener to enter our world. You know, 'Here's the door. I'm in.'"[9]

Physical Graffiti, the third album to come out on the Swan Song label, was released on February 24, 1975. The first leg of the tenth American tour had just come to an end (on February 16 in Saint Louis, Missouri); the second leg was about to get under way (on February 27 in Houston, Texas). It had been a long wait for a new record—nearly two years had passed since *Houses of the Holy*—and so the fans wasted no time in descending on the record stores. In the United Kingdom it shot straight to the number 1 spot on the very day of its release, made number 1 in the United States and Canada as well; reached number 2 in France, Spain, and Australia; number 3 in New Zealand…Hence their creative achievement was matched by commercial success (more than 16 million copies sold to date in the United States, over 600,000 in the United Kingdom, and more than 250,000 in Germany). Not only that, the release of *Physical Graffiti* had an effect, in the United States, on sales of the band's previous five LPs, which made a reappearance in the Billboard charts. Led Zeppelin was the first group ever to have six albums in the US hit parade concurrently!

The critics, for once, were in agreement in declaring this sixth album a masterpiece showcasing a conclusively mature brand of rock. Michael Oldfield, writing in *Melody Maker*, gave this rave review: "A work of genius, a superbly performed mixture of styles and influences that encompasses not only all aspects of Led Zep's recording career so far, but also much of rock as a whole. They can take as long as they like with the next album: *Physical Graffiti* will last 18 months or 18 years."[92] Even *Rolling Stone* praised Led Zeppelin's tour de force. Jim Miller described Led



The cover of Led Zeppelin's only double studio album, the work of American artist Peter Corriston. It was one of the most expensive album sleeves in the history of rock.

Zeppelin as possibly the best band in the world, or at least the only one that could rival the Rolling Stones and the Who, adding: "This two-record set, the product of almost two years' labor, is the band's *Tommy*, *Beggar's Banquet* and *Sgt. Pepper* rolled into one: *Physical Graffiti* is Led Zeppelin's bid for artistic respectability."[93] But it was Page himself who summed it up the best: "Throughout the album you could hear the four elements making up the fifth element."[9] A work of alchemy, in other words…

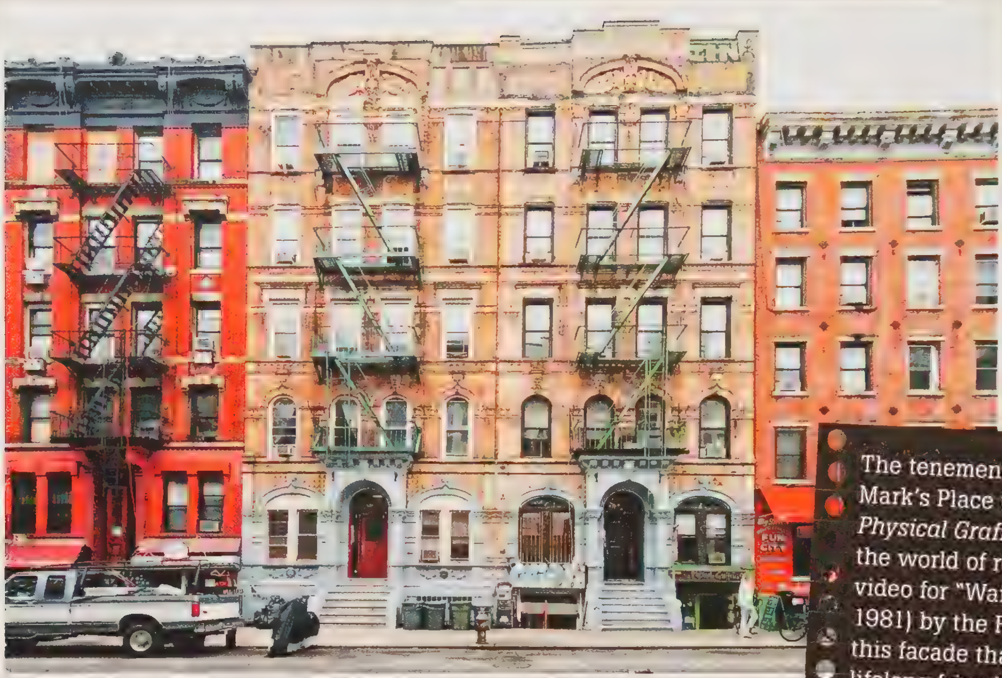
This double opus is ranked at number 73 on the *Rolling Stone* list of the "500 Greatest Albums of All Time."

The Sleeve

After the enigmatic artwork on *Houses of the Holy*, for which Aubrey Powell of Hipgnosis takes the credit, Jimmy Page, for the cover of *Physical Graffiti*, turned his attention to the other side of the Atlantic. For it was the work of a young American artist called Peter Corriston. Was Corriston inspired by the pop art sleeve of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* or the collages used for *Exile on Main St.*? Perhaps subconsciously. If there is one sure influence on the graphic designer from Greenwich Village, then it comes in the shape of Puerto Rican singer-songwriter José Feliciano, whose album *Compartments* (1973) featured, precisely, the facade of a building.

Peter Corriston roamed the streets of New York for several weeks before he discovered what he was looking for. "I had come up [with] a concept for the band based on the tenement, people living there and moving in and out,"[24] he explained. He found what he was after in the form of two symmetrical tenement blocks, with their traditional external flights of steps. Importantly, these blocks afforded an unobstructed view so that he would be able to get a clear shot of them. The buildings are at 96 and 98 St. Mark's Place, in the East Village.

He could now get to work. Constrained by the dimensions of the record sleeve (about 12 inches [30 centimeters]), Peter Corriston had to crop the fourth (or fifth) floor of the two Manhattan brownstones out of the photo. Then, taking the *Led Zeppelin III* artwork as his model, he cut out the windows, filling them instead with the album title, track information, or liner notes,



The two symmetrical tenement buildings at 96 and 98 St. Mark's Place, in New York's East Village.

The tenement building at 96 and 98 St. Mark's Place that appears on the sleeve of *Physical Graffiti* turned up once again in the world of rock when it appeared in the video for "Waiting on a Friend" (*Tattoo You*, 1981) by the Rolling Stones: it is in front of this facade that Mick Jagger waits for his lifelong friend Keith Richards.

according to the buyer's preference. He then added various people—the four band members, dressed up in drag (the photo was taken at a memorable soirée organized by Ahmet Ertegun at the Continental Hyatt House Hotel, later renamed "Riot House") in Los Angeles during the band's American tour, but also prominent figures as diverse as Queen Elizabeth II, the Virgin Mary, Elizabeth Taylor (as Cleopatra), the artist Marcel Duchamp, the astronaut Buzz Aldrin, Lee Harvey Oswald, the rock 'n' roll pioneer Jerry Lee Lewis, and King Kong.

The front cover features the two tenements photographed during daytime; on the back is the same view photographed at night. Photo credits go to Elliott Erwitt, B. P. Fallen, Roy Harper, and "Tinting Extraordinaire" Maurice Tate. Peter Corriston worked with British-based Mike Doud on the cover design. Dave Hefferman produced the window illustrations. At the time, the sleeve for *Physical Graffiti* was the most expensive of any in the record industry!

As far as the title is concerned, Jimmy Page once explained that it refers, of course, to the graffiti in the cover images, but also to the "awful lot of physical energy…used in producing an album."[21]

The Recording

The recording of *Physical Graffiti* was supposed to begin in October 1973 at Headley Grange. Jimmy Page had arranged to use the mobile studio owned by Ronnie Lane, former bassist and co-founder of the Small Faces and the Faces, since the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio was not available. He also hired a young American sound engineer named Ron Nevison, who had been involved in designing Lane's studio, which he had used to record most of *Quadrophenia* (1973), the double concept album by the Who. However, with John Paul Jones absent (not because he was quitting the band, but because he had decided to spend a little more time with his family), Page, Plant, and Bonham had to make do with working on two initial tracks, "Sick Again" and "Driving to Kashmir" (which would later become "Kashmir"), and revisiting several rock 'n' roll classics, from "Jailhouse Rock" to "Summertime Blues," to "Don't Be Cruel" and "Money Honey." To get their money's worth from the Ronnie Lane Mobile, which at that point was standing idle while awaiting Jones's return, Peter Grant had the ingenious idea of using it to record the debut album of Bad Company, one of the first bands signed by Swan Song, with Ron Nevison at the console.

So the sessions for the sixth album did not really get under way at Headley Grange until February 1974. "I wanted to go back to Headley Grange because we had that wonderful hall ambience on the drums," says Jimmy Page. "We knew how to get the cavernous effect on the drums like we did on 'When The Levee Breaks' or the close miking effect of, say, 'Misty Mountain Hop,' and the material we had suited that, so that's why we made the decision to go back there. I don't think everyone was

Ronnie Lane of the Faces in 1974. It was his mobile studio that was used to record the tracks for *Physical Graffiti*.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The sessions for *Physical Graffiti* were halted for a time after a member of the band's entourage, Peppy, crashed John Bonham's BMW 3.0 CSL into a wall. The roadie was reportedly so terrified of what Bonham might do to him that he hid in a closet for a day and a half.

very keen on staying there, but I was. I think the others stayed in a nearby hotel."[57] True: apart from Page, who, consequently, would be able to work at his leisure, the members of the team—put off by the cold at Headley and its menacing atmosphere—promptly headed off to Frensham Pond Hotel.

That winter of 1974 saw the recording, in turn, of "Kashmir," "Trampled Under Foot," "Custard Pie," "In the Light," "In My Time of Dying," "Sick Again," "The Wanton Song," and "Ten Years Gone," along with "Swan Song Part 1," and "Swan Song Part 2," which didn't make the final cut. This two-part instrumental, later rechristened "Midnight Moonlight," would be taken up again by Page when he was in the Firm, the band he formed in 1984 with Paul Rodgers, Tony Franklin, and Chris Slade, and featured on their eponymous album released in 1985. Also discarded was "Take Me Home" (a very good rock number but a little too similar to "The Wanton Song" and "Custard Pie"), which has never been released. "The band was very prepared and well rehearsed," Ron Nevison recalls. "There were very few takes, maybe six to eight, most of which were done to make minor adjustments to ensure the tempos were absolutely what they wanted and that the drum sound was correct. We'd start at one in the afternoon and end around one in the morning." Nevison goes on: "I started out living at Headley Grange with the band, but then I realized I would be better off not staying there. Sometimes it would get a little crazy. For example, they'd wake up me and want me to start recording something at four a.m. or something. I figured, for my sake and for theirs, if I wasn't around they wouldn't have that option. In the end, they agreed with me, because they knew they were a little insane."[9]

So Nevison only recorded the first eight songs and the two outtakes. This first stage of production at Headley Grange basically consisted of laying down the rhythm tracks for each number. Very few overdubs were done using the Ronnie Lane Mobile. The band then asked the young American sound engineer to help them finish off the album in an actual studio, in this case Olympic Studios in London, following the same approach they had been using ever since *Led Zeppelin III*. But Nevison was not very enamored of the suggestion—for two reasons. The first was that he did

Led Zeppelin on stage at the Richfield Coliseum in Cleveland on January 24, 1975.

not find the atmosphere very agreeable. Bad Company (whose first album he had just recorded) and Led Zeppelin did not leave him with fond memories. He explained: "They treat you like someone would treat a housekeeper. You know what I mean? You don't get a lot of respect. You're just an employee. There was no comradery."[94] The second reason was that he had been approached by Pete Townshend to work on the soundtrack for *Tommy*, the movie based on the rock opera by the Who. And since he got along well with Townshend on a personal level, he made his decision. "I didn't get fired from that album," he explained. "They were a month late doing that album and I had a start date to do the *Tommy* film. It ran into that and I called them up and said, 'Look, I can't finish this.' They were very annoyed. I don't think anybody had ever quit Led Zeppelin before."[94] He spent another one or two weeks working on *Physical Graffiti*, but it was Keith Harwood, who had already been involved in *Houses of the Holy*, who would polish off the album (including overdubs and mixing) at Olympic Studios between April and May (October or November according to some sources).

The additional material chosen for inclusion on the double album had been recorded between 1970 and 1972: "Bron-Yr-Aur" in July 1970 during the sessions for *Led Zeppelin III*; "Down by the Seaside" in December 1970 during the sessions for *Led Zeppelin IV*; "Boogie with Stu" and "Night Flight" in January 1971 at Headley Grange; and finally "Houses of the Holy," "Black Magic Woman," and "The Rover" in May 1972 during the recording sessions for *Houses of the Holy*.

The Team

So Ron Nevison was the latest in a long line of sound engineers to work with the band, following Andy Johns, George Chkiantz, and Eddie Kramer, the sound engineers on the last two albums. The young American began his career as a soundman, notably in 1970 on the Joe Cocker tour and the Derek and the Dominos tours.

When Chris Blackwell, the charismatic boss of Island Records, invited him to join his team in London, at Island Studios on Basing Street in 1970, he seized the opportunity.

Having then been hired by Trackplan, a company specializing in building recording studios—owned by Pete Townshend of the Who—he ended up building Ronnie Lane's mobile studio, which would be used for part of the recording of *Physical Graffiti*. He went on to have a brilliant career, working notably at the Record Plant studios, under the Californian sun. His collaborations would include the Who, Kiss, Ozzy Osbourne, John Wetton, Chicago, and Grand Funk Railroad, among many others.

Jimmy Page's
Danelectro DC 59,
model 3021.

Meanwhile, Keith Harwood was also reunited with Led Zeppelin at Olympic Studios, having worked with them on *Houses of the Holy*.

Technical Details

The overall sound is darker and more "live" than that of *Houses of the Holy*, for the good and simple reason that the band had again taken advantage of the acoustics of Headley Grange, with its high ceilings. This new album, then, was recorded with the help of the Ronnie Lane Mobile. One reason Ron Nevison had been picked as the sound engineer was that he knew this mobile studio like the back of his hand. "Who better to run a studio than the guy who built it?"[9] Jimmy Page later observed.

The Ronnie Lane Mobile, known by the abbreviation LMS (Lane Mobile Studio), was completed in 1972. Installed inside an Airstream trailer, the studio came equipped with a Helios console, a sixteen-track Studer A80 tape recorder (divided into two eight-tracks, owing to a lack of space in the van!), Tannoy monitors, an AKG BX20 reverb unit, and Universal Audio 1176N limiters, among other effects. The mobile was sold in 1982 and remains operational to this day. Ronnie Lane passed away in 1997.

At Olympic Studios, the desk in Studio One was still a custom-built console designed by Dick Swettenham, but Studio Two featured a console with eighteen inputs and sixteen outputs, made by Helios (the company that Swettenham had set up). The tape recorders were the ubiquitous inevitable 3M M56 sixteen-tracks, and the monitors were Tannoy Silvers fitted in Lockwood cabinets.

The Instruments

John Bonham probably recorded his drum parts on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle." Ron Nevison captured them principally with a pair of Neumann U87s, coloring the sound, especially on "Kashmir," with an Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser—an effect that Jimmy Page also used.

John Paul Jones was still inseparable from his Fender Jazz Bass, which he either plugged directly into the console or played through his Marshall, or a combination of both. Elsewhere he very likely played a Fender Precision fretless bass, especially on "In My Time of Dying." His various keyboard parts were performed on the Hohner Clavinet D6, the Hohner Electra-piano, the Hammond C-3, and the Mellotron Mark II. He also made use of a synthesizer, but unfortunately there is no record of which model: it may have been a Minimoog, a Moog IIIP, or a

Following spread: Jimmy Page indulges in some guitar pyrotechnics, to the delight of fans at the Olympia Stadium in Detroit on January 31, 1975.

The Led Zeppelin concert at the Palais des Sports in Lyon, France, on March 26, 1973, descended into a riot: eight thousand people (out of the twelve thousand present) had got in without a ticket due to poor security. There was then a power outage (during the performance of "Stairway to Heaven"), and a promoter ran off with the takings. The upcoming shows in Marseille and Lille were promptly canceled. Robert Plant would not play again in Lyon, "capital of the Gauls," until 1990.

Moog modular Model 15 connected to a Moog 952 keyboard controller. And his C. F. Martin A-style mandolin put in an appearance on "Black Country Woman" and "Boogie with Stu."

Jimmy Page continued to favor his Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One" and his Fender Electric XII. He can also be heard on his 1957 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst (which he used on the previous album), and on a second Strat, an Olympic White, presumably a 1964 model. He probably also recorded with his 1961 Danelectro DC 59, the 3021 model, a guitar he had bought during the sixties and that he had previously played only in concert. And he may well have added a Danelectro Coral sitar on "Ten Years Gone." On the acoustic side, he played his Harmony Sovereign H1260, and he can also be heard on his Martin D-28 on "Black Country Woman." Amplification comes courtesy of his Marshall 1959SLP and his Marshall 1982 cabinet. Some suggest that he replaced some tubes on the amplifier with KT88s, thereby increasing the power and clarity of the sound. He also opted for a Vox AC30/6, and he used the Leslie 147 speaker cabinet for the Hammond. Finally, he also tried out some new effects, such as the Gotham Delta-T 101 digital delay from Lexicon, and a Vox V846 wah-wah pedal.

Fender
STRATOCASTER
VOLUME
TONE
TONE

A 1957 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst, a model identical to Jimmy Page's.

In 1947, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry recorded "Custard Pie Blues," the song that was the inspiration behind Led Zeppelin's "Custard Pie."

CUSTARD PIE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:20

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, Clavinet
John Bonham: drums, maracas
Recorded
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

At Jason Bonham's wedding to Jan Charteris on April 28, 1990, Page, Plant, and Jones jammed with him, playing various numbers including "Custard Pie."

Genesis

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham kick off *Physical Graffiti* with a powerful, adrenaline-packed blues-rock number. Did their old pact with those "agents of the devil"—as the pioneers of the blues were known—still hold? Certainly its title, "Custard Pie," bears echoes of the Piedmont (East Coast) blues classic, "I Want Some of Your Pie," recorded by Blind Boy Fuller (and Sonny Terry) in 1939 and then by Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee in 1947 with the title "Custard Pie Blues."

In American slang, which blues musicians have always drawn on, the expression *custard pie* refers to a woman's genitals. *I want to eat your custard pie/You gotta give me some of it*, Fuller sang. You don't have to be a connoisseur of the blues to get an idea of what the North Carolinian singer and guitarist had in mind…

Thirty-five years later, Robert Plant served up another tasty custard pie to fans of the band—once again featuring an abundance of double entendres. The lyrics tell the story of a red-hot lover who is in a hurry to get down to business. *Drop down, baby, let your daddy see*. In fact, the Led Zeppelin vocalist is paraphrasing the Mississippi Sheiks, then Sleepy John Estes, who, in "Drop Down Mama" (1935) sang: *Now, drop down, baby, let your daddy be*. The lover expresses himself even more directly: *See me comin', throw your man out the door*. From then on it's pure erotic indulgence: *I chew on a piece of your custard pie/Drop down*.

Led Zeppelin played "Custard Pie" during rehearsals for the 1975 tours, but it then disappeared from the set lists. Jimmy Page, though, added it to his repertoire for his *Outrider* tour in 1988 and then, after performing it with Plant on the 1995–1996 world tour, came up with a new version with the Black Crowes in 1999.

Production

From the very first notes of Jimmy Page's riff, one senses that this new album will have an altogether different feel than the last one. While most of the numbers on *Houses of the Holy* tended towards a more "prog" sound, the opening track to *Physical Graffiti* serves as a reminder that Led Zeppelin is still capable of delivering blues rock with the same fierce determination as in their early days. Page's Gibson Les Paul "Number One" is probably fed through a Marshall 1959SLP combined with a Marshall 1982. The sound is dry, the distortion natural, without reverb, probably an overdub recorded at Olympic. Positioned in the right audio channel, it is joined almost immediately by John Paul Jones's Hohner Clavinet D6, which is placed opposite it, in the left channel—the Clavinet, which he probably used on the previous album (listen to "Over the Hills and Far Away") is a keyboard that tends to be associated more with funk music. It has a sharp, slightly distorted sound quality, probably captured through an amplifier. With the two instruments right and left in the stereo mix, John Bonham then comes in on his Ludwig with a beat of the snare drum. The drums once again have the same fullness as on the takes for the third and fourth albums. Jimmy Page had good reason for wanting to return to Headley Grange: this magical place provided an ideal environment. Its acoustics are phenomenal, and Ron Nevison was asked to capture the sound following the same rules they had devised in the past for that location. He positioned a single pair of Neumann U87s on the second landing above the entrance hall where Bonham's drum kit had been set up. "John was adamant by not having microphones near his drums," he once said. "I wanted to put some backup microphones behind his kit, but he wouldn't let me!"[95] From the moment it makes its entrance, the Ludwig provides a fantastic backdrop for Page and Jones. The beats are heavy, the groove powerful. Each strike of the crash cymbal is an explosion, and the hi-hat has to work hard,

Opposite: Despite the problems with his vocal cords, Robert Plant delivers a memorable performance on "Custard Pie."

The bluesman Sleepy John Estes, paraphrased by Robert Plant on "Custard Pie."

delivering a locomotive swing. The hi-hat is in fact duplicated by some maracas (probably played by Bonham himself), which help accentuate the pulse of the rhythm. John Paul Jones's Jazz Bass knits well with Bonzo's highly syncopated bass drum.

When the drums come in, so also do the vocals, which are rather undermixed. Robert Plant is clearly comfortable with this kind of blues rock, his voice high-pitched, powerful, and suggestive. He is back to a more familiar performance style, after the previous album where he tried to express himself in different ways. Nevertheless, he comes across as more fragile than in the past. His voice falters in places (for example at 3:09), possibly the result of an operation he had on his vocal cords in 1973. The fact is that, since the band's inception, he had never exercised restraint in his vocal performances, screaming the Zeppelin lyrics for all the world to hear. As Plant had never learned how to protect his voice, the constant strain it was under, coupled with his smoking habit, started to take its toll, resulting in a reduced vocal range. His voice would no longer be able to soar to the same heights as on previous albums. In spite of this, Robert Plant's performance is still of an extremely high standard.

Jimmy Page takes a very good solo on his Les Paul, probably modulated by a new wah-wah pedal, a Vox W840 (from 1:40). Some sources claim that he fed it through an ARP synthesizer. He also seems to add in a rhythm guitar during the track's coda, at around 2:56. Robert Plant brings a fabulous blues feel to it, with some wonderful harmonica lines. His phrasing is excellent, the sound distorted and enhanced by phenomenal reverb in many places. Superb.

"Custard Pie" was an excellent choice of song to mark Led Zeppelin's return to the scene, proof of the band's vitality, as they open their sixth opus with a burst of freshness, power, and passion.

Jimmy Page at the Nassau Coliseum with his trusty Gibson Les Paul, in February 1975.

THE ROVER

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:54

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974 (?)
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Eddie Kramer, Ron Nevison (?), Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

Strange though it may seem when you listen to the final recording, "The Rover" had started out as an acoustic track with hints of the Hendrix version of "All along the Watchtower" (dating from Robert Plant and Jimmy Page's stay in the Welsh cottage Bron-Yr-Aur). After a spectacular reworking, this composition by Jimmy Page and Robert Plant was recorded during the sessions for *Houses of the Holy* at Stargroves in May 1972. Dropped from the final track listing for that album, it was later granted a new lease on life on *Physical Graffiti*.

It was an inspired decision, for "The Rover" ranks as one of the band's great hard-rock successes, to the extent that it was known to have influenced some of the heavy-metal bands of the eighties and nineties. The lyrics, too, are worthy of particular attention. *Rover* means vagabond or wanderer. So the travel theme surfaces again. The narrator says he has been to London and seen the seven wonders of the world. He has noticed that *there's a new plague on the land*, adding, *if we could just join hands...*

Who, then, is this figure who takes such a bleak view of the world? The answer lies, perhaps, in the line *Traversed the planet, when heaven sent me*. Could this be Jesus Christ come back to earth to redeem mankind? Is it he who has heard the call of the rivers...?

However, Robert Plant soon sets off in a different direction: the woman he loves is *lying, on the dark side of the globe*. To hazard an explanation, perhaps the end of a world symbolizes the end of a love affair. Nevertheless, there is a hint of optimism, as Plant sings: *Is the new world rising, from the shambles of the old?* Ultimately a song about peace, love, and brotherhood, it is one that Led Zeppelin has never played live onstage (only rehearsed), apart from its intro, which was played in combination with "Sick Again" on the 1977 tours.

COVER

The progressive metal band Dream Theater performed the intro to "The Rover" as part of a medley dedicated to Led Zeppelin, "The Rover"/"Achilles Last Stand"/"The Song Remains the Same," which appears on their EP *A Change of Seasons* (1995).

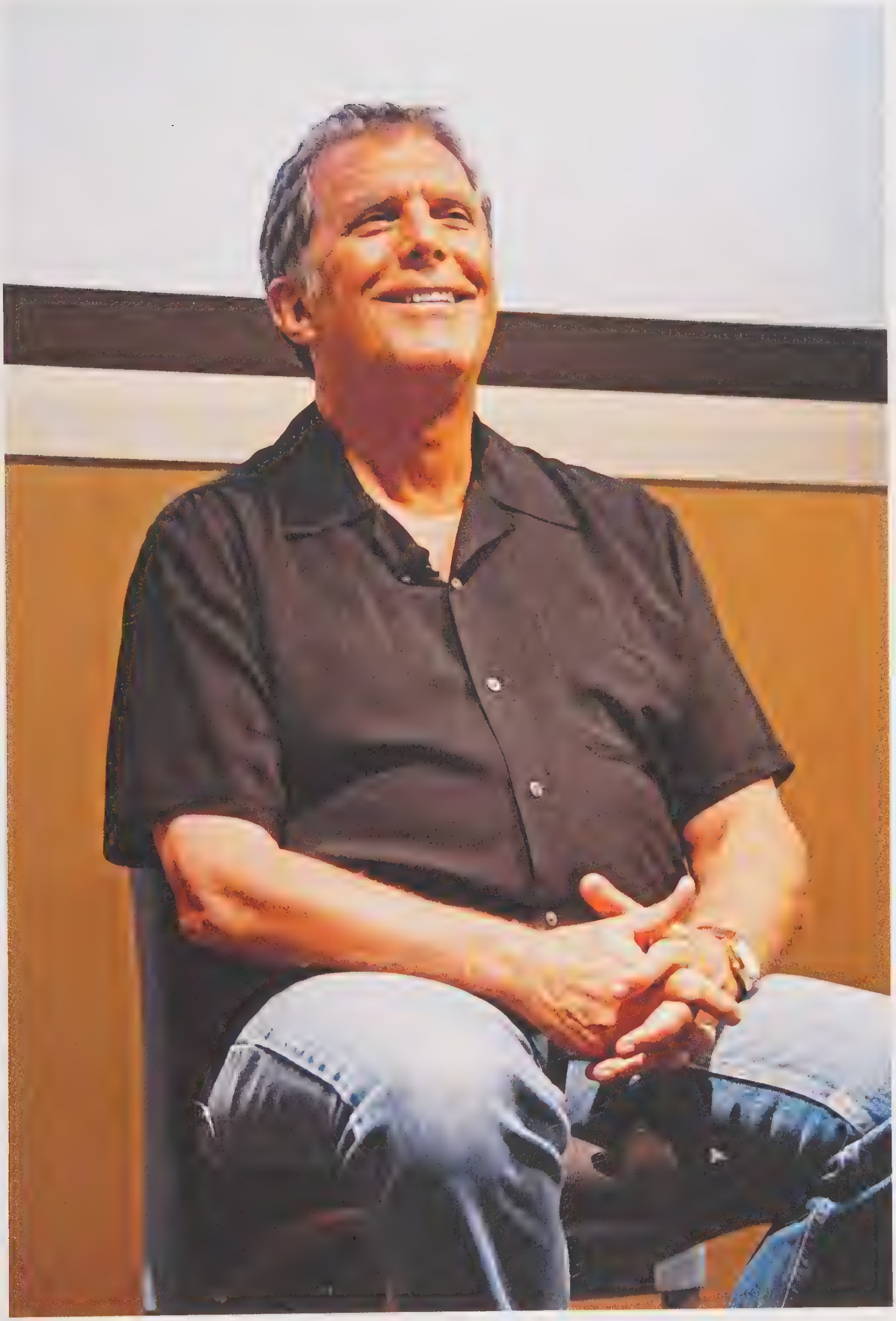
Production

John Bonham gets "The Rover" under way with a simple yet highly effective drum pattern. Recorded in 1972 using the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio at Mick Jagger's house, with Eddie Kramer at the controls, the sound of his Ludwig is not as punchy as the sound he was able to achieve in the entrance hall of Headley Grange. All the same, it is still a powerful sound that does the job. After this brief introduction, it is Jimmy Page's turn to make an entrance. As he himself once said, his guitar work is pure rock 'n' roll posturing! "The whole thing about 'The Rover' is the whole swagger of it, the whole guitar attitude swagger. I'm afraid I've got to say it, but it's the sort of thing that is so apparent when you hear 'Rumble' by Link Wray—it's just total attitude, isn't it? So that sort of thing, which is sort of probably in my DNA to be honest with you."[96] Page starts with some well-chosen power chords and licks on his heavily distorted Gibson Les Paul, before attacking the main riff (at 0:24). His guitar sound is tinged by phasing, courtesy of the Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser, an effect that would have been added during final mixing at Olympic Studios. One might note a certain resemblance between this drum/guitar riff introduction and that of "Wicked Annabella," on the Kinks album *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society* (1968). But the similarity ends there. For with John Paul Jones on his bass, simply and effectively underpinning both the riff on the Gibson and Bonzo's drumming, "The Rover" defines a real hard-rock prototype from which numerous bands would take inspiration: heavy drumming, a pulsing bass, and gutsy guitar, all with an uncluttered and direct simplicity to it.

It is not until 1:09 that Robert Plant comes in on the vocals. His voice is perfect, lyrical, with sustained vibrato, as powerful as ever, high-pitched and with a rock vibe. The vocal part seems to have been recorded in 1972 at Stargroves, as it has a slightly different timbre from the vocal on "Custard Pie." He is accompanied by Jimmy Page, whose Les Paul is definitely double-tracked, with an added arpeggio part on the last two lines of the verses (for example at 1:28, 2:13, 3:58 on the left). The guitarist later revealed the origin of the overdubs on this number: "We actually got to Headley on the second visit [after the one for the fourth album in 1971] where we did guitar overdubs and it was mixed at Olympic."[96] After three verses, he sets off on an excellent solo (with the first notes doubled at 3:15), with a clean, melodic sound, both technical and simple, and with unique phrasing slightly reminiscent of that on "Celebration Day" on the third album.

Whose Fault?

But the recording of this solo also gave rise to a cryptic comment printed on the sleeve among the album credits: "Guitar lost courtesy of Nevison. Salvaged by the grace of Harwood." What happened was that Ron Nevison had been accused of accidentally erasing Page's solo, a mistake that Keith Harwood, fortunately, was able to rectify. Harwood apparently managed to lay his hands on an alternative take and save the day. Although Page maintained that the guitar overdubs were done at Headley, Nevison refuted this and denied ever having erased anything. "I will tell you why it is wrong," he told Jeb Wright. "I didn't know until the album came out that they had used previous songs from *Houses of the Holy*. I only did eight or nine tracks on *Physical Graffiti*. I never worked on that song."[94] And he described exactly



Sound engineer Ron Nevison (here, in 2009), in the firing line at the time. Might he have erased Jimmy Page's solo on "The Rover?"

Following spread: Robert Plant, Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham at the Inglewood Forum, Los Angeles, in 1973, during their ninth American tour.

what his role had been: "I didn't do any final guitar overdubs with Jimmy Page. I only did track overdubs where they were replaced later. [...] There is no way, even if I had that tape, that it could have been erased by me."[94] So his conclusion seems logical enough: "I think Keith Harwood or one of the other guys blamed it on me when it happened."[94]

The track continues with a final verse and refrain, before moving on to the coda, where Plant and Page both have a chance to improvise in their own way.

"The Rover" is a very good track, one that probably has not received the credit it deserves, but that has inspired many a guitarist, being, as Jimmy Page put it, a perfect example of "guitar attitude."

PELIN

IN MY TIME OF DYING

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 11:08

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

At one of the Led Zeppelin gigs at Earls Court, London (May 17–25, 1975), Robert Plant dedicated "In My Time of Dying" to the Labour politician Denis Healey, then chancellor of the exchequer. Healey had declared that he would make the ultra-rich pay. A dig by the singer?

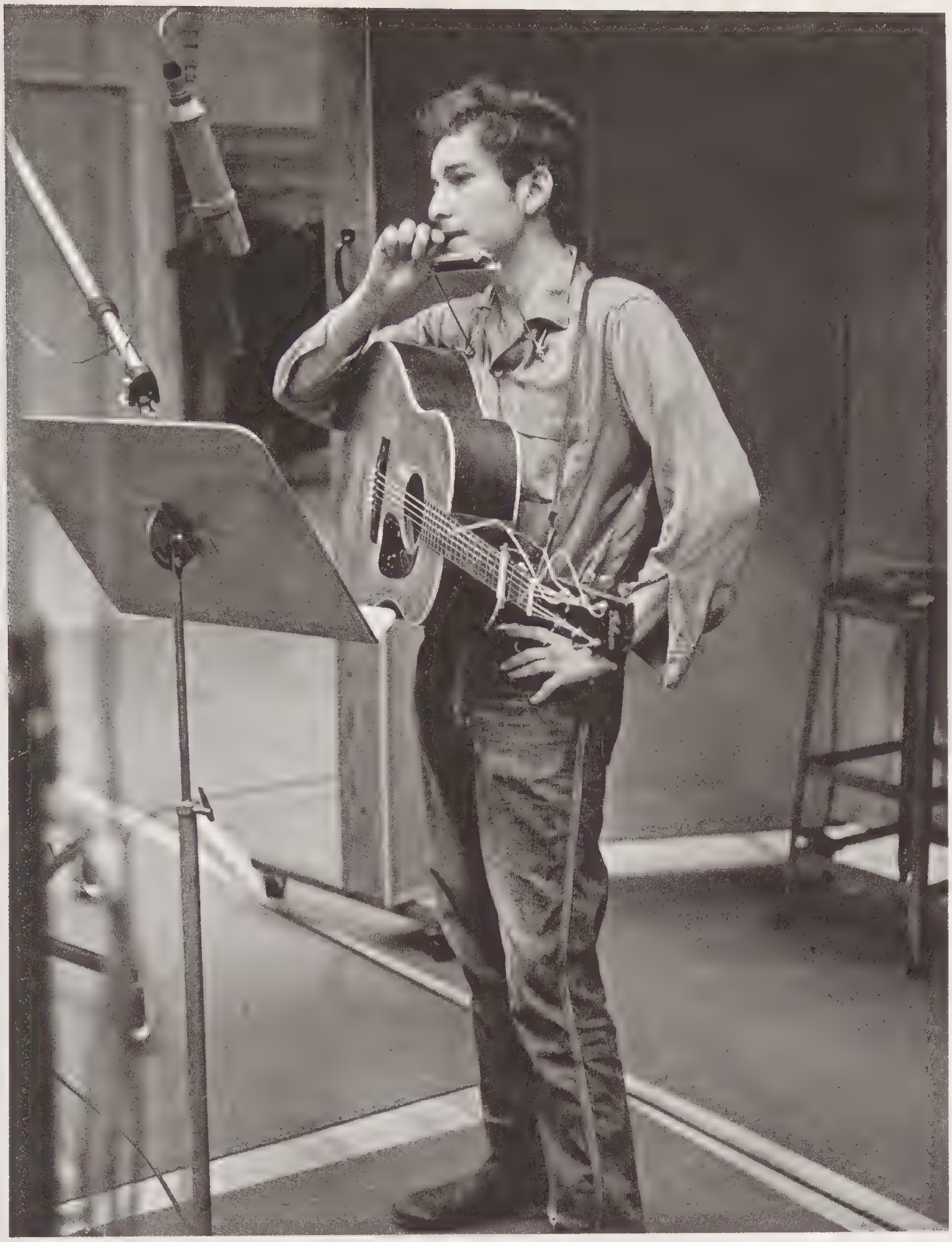
Genesis

"In My Time of Dying" is a highly charged reworking of a gospel-blues song entitled "Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed," which is said to have originated in New Orleans in the mid-twenties. Blind Willie Johnson recorded two takes of it on December 3, 1927; the second was in fact released the following year as his first record, on the Columbia label. Its title alludes to the opening verses of Psalm 41 in the Bible, where it is written: "Blessed is he who has regard for the weak" (verse 1) and "The Lord will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness" (verse 3).

Besides Blind Willie Johnson, other bluesmen later recorded their own versions of this number, with titles very similar to the original, notably Charley Patton in 1929 ("Jesus Is a Dying-Bed Maker") and Josh White in 1933 ("Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed"). Some thirty years later, a young songwriter from Duluth, Minnesota, also came up with a version of "Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed," which he titled "In My Time of Dyin'"...His name: Bob Dylan. The recording, produced on November 20, 1961, at Columbia Recording Studios, was included on his first album.

Led Zeppelin drew much of their inspiration from the Bob Dylan version, certainly as regards the lyrics. *In my time of dying, want nobody to mourn*...The person whose death is drawing near is not sad, because *Jesus gonna make up my dyin' bed*. Yet he wants to know: *Oh, Saint Peter, at the gates of heaven/Won't you let me in?* But faced with the prospect of the final judgment, he feels confident: *I never did no harm...I've only been this young once*. He feels supremely happy: *Meet me, Jesus, meet me*, and is preparing to depart from this world in a state of blessed grace...

"In My Time of Dying," which is Led Zeppelin's longest track (at over eleven minutes) and a real virtuoso number for the musicians onstage, featured on the set list for the concert they played in Rotterdam on January 11,



Bob Dylan recording at Columbia Studio in November 1961. His version of "In My Time of Dyin'" appeared on his first album, a version that would make a big impression on Led Zeppelin.

1975. It was also performed at the 1977 dates (despite Robert Plant's reservations, after he suffered a near-fatal car accident on August 4, 1975), and then Jimmy Page played it on the *Outrider* tour in 1988.

Production

Musically, it is the Josh White version that clearly bears the greatest resemblance to Led Zeppelin's. But the similarity lies more in the spirit of the performance than in the melody. From the very first notes of "In My Time of Dying," on which Jimmy Page plays slide guitar, it is apparent that, melodically, this is a piece that is unique and owes no debt to anyone. The guitarist performs a superb bottleneck lick on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One," which he colors with phasing from his Eventide PS 101 and emphasizes with very strong reverb. His Les Paul is in open-A tuning (E A E A C-sharp E) and positioned on the left. On the right, a second guitar answers him, its sound distorted and favoring the mid-range frequencies: it is his 1961 Danelectro 3021, used here for the first time on a Led Zeppelin record. With his two guitars, Page plunges us straightaway into a dense, highly charged, and blues-drenched ambiance. When John Bonham comes in on the drums, they give the track incredible depth. The sound of his Ludwig is powerful and cavernous, recorded by Ron Nevison in the entrance hall of Headley Grange using a single pair of Neumann U87s.

The folk-blues singer-guitarist Josh White, who recorded "Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dying Bed" in 1933. This gospel-blues number would serve as inspiration for "In My Time of Dying" during the sessions for Physical Graffiti.

And with John Paul Jones's bass in support, the trio sets off on a very long blues number à la Zeppelin. "'In My Time of Dying' was recorded in one or two largely improvised takes," Page explained. "We're right on the edge. At over eleven minutes, it's the longest Zeppelin studio recording, but when you're playing like that, who wants to stop?"[9] In fact the band recorded a version that would never be played again, with no dropouts and no editing. Only the guitar overdubs were added. And the result is a surprising one.

Robert Plant launches into the first verse with a voice that is no stranger to the blues. Page accompanies him on a single guitar, before the bass and drums join in on the line *Well, well, well, so I can die easy*, which, incidentally, bears echoes of "Well Well Well," a song on John Lennon's first album, from 1970, *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* (listen at 1:37).

At 3:45, Jimmy Page strikes a new riff, funkier this time, before reverting to a very bluesy lick. The two guitars are positioned centrally from now on, with stereo reverb taking the panorama wider. Bonzo's drums are deafening, but John Paul Jones also holds his own with a bass part apparently played on a fretless bass, probably a Fender Precision, as he would do onstage. He alternates, in his usual way, between doubling of the riffs, rhythm parts, and melody parts. Plant soon joins in again, begging Saint Peter to let him enter the kingdom…His singing is perfect, blues infused, with a time lag that makes for a delicious performance (from 4:01). Then Jimmy Page embarks on his first solo, starting out on his Les Paul before switching to his Danelectro—probably an overdub recorded at Olympic Studios (listen at 4:57). The guitar is on its own, without the Gibson, with reverb, presumably mono, for a furious bottleneck part. It is an aggressive, distorted rock sound with midrange emphasis. Page plays brilliantly, with exquisite feeling and with a tension that he maintains unfailingly. Bonzo accompanies him with some extraordinary

Chris Cornell, the Soundgarden frontman, another rock legend.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The last concert played by Chris Cornell of Soundgarden was at the Fox Theatre in Detroit on May 17, 2017. The final song he performed was entitled "Slaves and Bulldozers." He had incorporated several lines taken from "In My Time of Dying" into the song. A few hours later, Chris Cornell was found dead in his bathroom at the MGM Grand in Detroit.

drumming on his Ludwig, in a staggering demonstration on his bass drum, which is hardly allowed a moment's rest! Jones supports him with a bass line pulsing with fierce energy, which he constantly varies with great inventiveness.

As soon as he takes up the vocal again (at 5:39), Robert Plant injects more power into his singing, delivering a punchy, high-pitched performance in his typical style. The band is now in full flow, delivering a storming blues-rock demonstration. After a few bars, Jimmy Page sets off on a second solo. And, as before, he starts out on his Les Paul before switching to his Danelectro, still played slide (from 6:36). He finishes on his Gibson, launching into a passage that is more rock than blues, and Plant joins in again with the vocal. Although he sings with the same dynamism and flair, from this point on his voice does falter sometimes when under particular strain (for example at 7:41). But that doesn't stop him from repeating the phrase *oh my Jesus* a dozen times with power and feeling, in the best blues and gospel tradition, his voice double-tracked and accentuated by very prominent reverb (from 8:16). The song then moves into a thrilling coda, a remarkably high-caliber improvisation in which each band member delivers a stunning performance (from 8:34). "It is jammed at the end and we do not even have a proper way to stop the thing,"[4] Jimmy Page later said. However, the song ends with a final chord, a strike of the crash cymbal, and the voice of Robert Plant. A conversation is suddenly audible (at 10:55): (Someone coughs, probably Bonzo). Plant: "*Cough…*" Bonham: "That's gonna be the one, isn't it?" Ron Nevison: "Come have a listen, then." Bonham: "Oh yes, thank you."

"In My Time of Dying" is unquestionably one of the gems of *Physical Graffiti* and proves that, on the eve of the punk age, Led Zeppelin is still capable of performing blues rock with incomparable vigor and inventiveness.

The song that gave its name to the fifth album actually appears on *Physical Graffiti*, a song with a typical Zeppelinesque riff.

HOUSES OF THE HOLY

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:01

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, tambourine (?)
Jimmy Page: electric guitars, backing vocals (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, backing vocals (?)
John Bonham: drums, cowbell, backing vocals (?)
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April 1972
Mixing
Electric Lady Studios, New York: June 1972
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: George Chkiantz
Mixing: Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

John Bonham obviously must have liked the squeaking of his bass drum pedal, as he treats us to the characteristic creaking sound throughout the whole of this track.

Genesis

The story of the fourth track on *Physical Graffiti* is a slightly strange one: this song gave its name to the band's fifth album, even though the song itself was dropped from the album. The recording of "Houses of the Holy" dates back, then, to the April 1972 sessions at Olympic Studios, and the mixing was then carried out at Electric Lady Studios. What does the phrase *houses of the holy* refer to? The literal meaning is a place of prayer or meditation, a chapel or church, for example. But the lyrics suggests that what is referred to here are the concert halls all over the world where Led Zeppelin plays and, by extension, the almost spiritual relationship that the band has with their fans when playing onstage. *Can I take you to the show?* the narrator asks his girlfriend, adding: *From the houses of the holy, we can watch the white doves go.*

Very soon, though, we are thrust into another atmosphere, another world: *Will you heed the master's call / Oh Satan and man*. Perhaps Robert Plant is trying to say that people must always fight to stop themselves from being overpowered by the forces of evil. Given Robert Plant's liking for double meanings, it is not impossible. It is also very tempting to interpret some lines of the song as sexual allusions: *There's an angel on my shoulder, in my hand a sword of gold/Let me wander in your garden and the seeds of love I'll sow.*

Another peculiar fact about "Houses of the Holy" is that, while it seems like an homage to the fans, it has never been performed live onstage.

Production

Keith Harwood clearly had no involvement in this track in 1974, and the version that appeared on the record was probably the one mixed by Eddie Kramer in New York in 1972, with no modifications. Its slight similarity to "Dancing Days," which featured on the *Houses of the Holy* album, may explain why it was shelved at the time. All the same, it would have been a shame if the band had

LED
ZEPPELIN

left it to gather dust. "I really fancied putting out a song called 'Houses of the Holy' on the album,"[37] Jimmy Page later commented.

And it is with a classic Jimmy Page riff that "Houses of the Holy" opens. The guitarist, playing his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" in his typical style, accentuates his hook with an aggressive, rock sound. It features a "bathtub" effect, the result of a very short delay produced using the Gotham Delta T-101 digital delay from Lexicon, which had come out in 1971. Listening to the rough mix of the track—which features on companion disc two of the deluxe edition of *Physical Graffiti*—it is apparent that this effect was only added at the mixing stage, as there was no delay on the original guitar sound. Page doubles his Gibson, with one track on the left and one in the center. They are answered by a third guitar with a funky vibe, undoubtedly the 1957 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst, which Page used once before during the sessions for the fifth album, on "The Crunge." Some sources mention a Telecaster, but apparently, at the time, Page did not own any Telecaster other than his "Dragon Tele," and he stated on many occasions that the last time he played it was on the solo of "Stairway to Heaven."

The moment the rhythm section arrives on the scene, the track takes a more cheerful turn, Bonham's drums assiduously underpinning the rhythmic patterns of the guitars, and John Paul Jones's bass adding depth to the riff. His Jazz Bass has quite a mid-range emphasis to it; he is probably playing with a plectrum and is plugged into his Marshall. Robert Plant comes in, his vocal quiet at first, his voice smooth and warm. It is only on the last two verses that he adopts a rock tone, finishing the track with a burst of power (from 2:25). Extra care has been taken over the vocal parts, with Plant harmonizing with himself on the fourth verse (at 2:00), pop-style backing vocals accompanying him on the last three verses, and a rather comical vocal effect—a kind of *waah* uttered by Plant—to end the final verse (at around 3:00).

Finally, on the coda, Jimmy Page harmonizes his riff (at 3:18), before launching into an excellent solo, starting at 3:28. He is definitely on his Les Paul, with a sound that favors the mid-range frequencies, probably achieved by having his wah-wah pedal set to an intermediate position. A fairly noticeable delay is added in the closing moments, toward the end of the fade-out.

Note that, from 1:20 onward, each verse is accompanied by Bonham striking not only a cowbell but also a tambourine, which is inaudible on this recording but can be easily made out on the alternative version on the CD in the deluxe edition.

TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:38

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, Clavinet
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

When Led Zeppelin played their series of gigs in Earls Court, London, Swan Song produced a special limited edition of five thousand copies of the single "Trampled Under Foot"/"Black Country Woman" for British record stores. It is now a highly sought-after collector's item!

Genesis

Without actually using the same lyrics, in "Trampled Under Foot" Robert Plant drew on the same metaphor that Robert Johnson had used in his "Terraplane Blues" (his first record, cut in San Antonio, Texas, in 1936 and released the following year) to express the erotic impulses his girlfriend inspired in him. At concerts at Earls Court, London (between May 17 and 25, 1975), Robert Plant announced this song with the words: "If you liken a motor car to the parts of a human body, then sometimes you can get trampled under foot!"[111] It is interesting to note, though, that "Terraplane Blues" is a song about infidelity and the loneliness that can result (*Who been drivin' my Terraplane for you since I been gone?*), themes that are not replicated in the Led Zeppelin track.

The fact remains that comparing a woman to a car suggests a chauvinist attitude, though the dubious metaphor is skillfully elaborated at every point of this rock number: *Greasy slicked-down, groovy leather trim/I like the way ya hold the road, Mama, it ain't no sin.* And the Led Zeppelin front man carries on with the raunchy innuendo: *Mama, let me pump your gas…Baby, I can work all night, believe I got the perfect tools*…followed by *Factory air conditioned, heat begins to rise…Come to me for service every hundred miles/Baby, let me check your points, fix your overdrive…*

The parallel with the pioneer of the Delta blues ends there. Conceived during a jam session at Headley Grange, and driven by the combination of John Paul Jones's Clavinet and John Bonham's fabulous swing machine, "Trampled Under Foot" has much more in common with Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" than with "Terraplane Blues." It was probably this reference to the soul/funk of the "little wonder" of Motown that prompted the four band members and Peter Grant to choose this track as the A-side of the one and only single to be taken from *Physical Graffiti* (with "Black Country Woman" on the B-side). In February 1975 this two-track record was

Stevie Wonder in 1972, the year of "Superstition," a mini masterpiece of soul funk, which caught the attention of the Zeppelin four.

released, in the usual way, in several countries, including the United States, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Japan, but not in the United Kingdom (except on a promotional basis). Although it received sustained airplay on the radio stations, "Trampled Under Foot" only reached number 38 on the Billboard charts (and number 28 on the Cash Box charts), number 41 in Canada, and number 60 in Australia. The song became a staple of their stage set, however, and was played regularly from 1975 all the way to 1980. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and Jason Bonham performed it at the famous concert on December 10, 2007, at London's O2 Arena. Around ten years earlier, Robert Plant had included it in his repertoire on the *Now and Zen* tour.

Production

Jimmy Page once commented that "Trampled Under Foot" happened spontaneously, "just starting out of a riff."[96] Indeed, the band, who were pleased to get back to the acoustics and ambiance of Headley Grange, were bursting with ideas, and it did not take them long to compose this fabulous funk-rock number during a rehearsal. It was initially named "Brandy & Coke," a title that perhaps hints at the revelry that apparently went on at the country house…The spirit of the number is obviously influenced by the wave of funk that had been invading the airwaves since the early seventies with songs like "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder, cited above, not to mention "Outa-Space" by Billy Preston (from the LP *I Wrote a Simple Song*, 1971), and "Machine Gun" by the Commodores (the title track from their 1974 album). The one thing they all had in common was their use of the Hohner Clavinet D6, the same instrument John Paul Jones uses for the opening of "Trampled Under Foot." And it is his keyboard that forms the very backbone of the track, his hook a thematic thread running through

John Paul Jones on the keyboards on stage in Los Angeles in 1975. The Hohner Clavinet is the driving force behind "Trampled Under Foot."

from start to finish. After a first run-through of the theme, John Bonham gets the Zeppelin machine on the road with a beat of the snare drum. He immediately takes up the Clavinet's funky rhythm, providing—as always—a sensational accompaniment on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle," with an infectious swing and a beat so solid it could fell an ox. The tone is "live" and controlled, the fabulous acoustics of Headley Grange happily captured by Ron Nevison. John Paul Jones—yes, here he is again—supports Bonham with a solid bass line that is simple and effective, transforming their rhythm section into an exceptional groove machine.

Jimmy Page doubles Jones's riff on his Gibson Les Paul Standard, the sound distorted by his Marshall. His guitar is positioned on the right, opposite the Clavinet; the guitar is also backed up by a second guitar placed on the left, which Page modulates with his Vox V846 wah-wah pedal between the verses, both on the subtle ascending chord sequence and on the repetition of the riff (from 0:17, for example). Robert Plant excels in his lead vocal with a highly suggestive, powerful rock performance. Incidentally, he reportedly wrote the lyrics in the space of barely half an hour, while his bandmates were busy laying down the rhythm track.

From the fourth verse (1:06), Jimmy Page adds some short distorted phrases played solo on his Gibson, the notes wandering around with a very particular sound that much impressed the journalist Nick Kent at the time. "He thought that was a really revolutionary sound," the guitarist later said. "And I hadn't realized that anyone would think it was, but I can explain exactly how it's done. Again, it's sort of backwards echo and wah-wah."[18] In fact this effect dates back to his Yardbirds days; he used it on "Ten Little Indians" in 1967, and it popped up again in 1969 on Led Zeppelin's first album. On "Trampled Under Foot," though, the ghostly, swirling effect of his guitar has a supernatural feel to it, and brings an experimental dimension to the number. His phrases seem to answer Plant's, and the mix of the two works well, even though they occasionally overlap, making it hard to grasp what's going on.

A rare thing: after the sixth verse (from 2:14), John Paul Jones launches into a solo on his Clavinet. Jones is no Stevie Wonder or Billy Preston, but he delivers a high-caliber performance, supported by Page's two guitars. The first embarks relentlessly on riff after riff (on the right), while the second gets a rhythmic hook going, its sound heavily modulated by the wah-wah pedal (on the left), the whole thing set against a background of distorted phrases and backward echo.

After moving through the last three verses, the band enters into a coda more than a minute in length, as Robert Plant and Jimmy Page take the tension up a notch with some brilliant improvisation. Jimmy Page, on his Gibson, unleashes phrases enhanced with reverse echo and dramatic reverb, the whole thing featuring impressive stereo effects (listen from 4:44). The track ends cleanly on a final chord.

It is not surprising that "Trampled Under Foot" is one of Robert Plant's favorite numbers. Its blend of rock and funk works really well, and makes "The Crunge" on *Houses of the Holy* sound amateurish by comparison.

KASHMIR

John Bonham, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 8:37 (the original vinyl stated 9:41, a printing error)

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars (six- and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass, Mellotron
John Bonham: drums
Unidentified Musicians: strings and brass

Recorded

Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: October 1973, February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974 (?), November 10, 1974

Mixing

Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: November 1974 (?)

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

Jimmy Page claimed that a casual conversation he had had with William S. Burroughs was what spurred him to venture into a new form of musical expression, as epitomized in "Kashmir": "We had a lengthy conversation on the hypnotic power of rock and how it paralleled the music of Arabic cultures. This was an observation Burroughs had after hearing "Black Mountain Side," from our first album. He then encouraged me to go to Morocco and investigate the music firsthand, something Robert and I eventually did."[9]

The conversation with the iconic Beat Generation novelist that Jimmy Page referred to took place in New York in February 1975, at the beginning of Led Zeppelin's US tour, and was then published in *Crawdaddy* magazine in June 1975. However, the timings don't tally here. The guitarist's interest in the music of the Maghreb predates his meeting with Burroughs, as it was in February 1974 that the four members of Led Zeppelin started work on "Kashmir." And Page and Plant's trip to Morocco actually took place in 1973, just after their ninth American tour (May 4–July 29)…

Robert Plant himself explained that the lyrics to this song—originally titled "Driving to Kashmir"—derived from his Moroccan journey from Guelmim to Tan-Tan: "I kept bumping down a desert track and there was nobody for miles, except a guy on a camel. The whole inspiration for the song came from the fact the road went on and on and on. It was a single-track road which cut neatly through the desert…it looked like you were driving down a channel. I thought, this is great, but one day…Kashmir. That's my Shangri-La."[10]

It is indeed a very long way from southern Morocco all the way to Kashmir. But it was this mountainous region administered by India, Pakistan, and China that whetted the imagination of Robert Plant, and filled his dreams with stars. The narrator is *a traveler of both time and space*, who is heading along the yellow desert trail on a

The prominent Beat generation writer William Burroughs encouraged Jimmy Page to explore Eastern exoticism, which found expression in "Kashmir."

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Only two tracks in Led Zeppelin's entire discography would be credited to Bonham, Page, and Plant: "Out on the Tiles" (*Led Zeppelin III)* and "Kashmir."

quest for his *Shangri-la beneath the summer moon*. He had already taken *the path that led me to that place/ Yellow desert stream*, crossed the *sea of years* and passed along the *straits of fear*. Is this a reference to the stories of Rudyard Kipling, set in the time when the Indian people were under British rule? Or is it an allusion to the "hippie trail," the route followed by hippies all the way to Kathmandu, Nepal, in the sixties and early seventies? That's one of various interpretations. This journey may be the one Led Zeppelin has been on since 1968. In this case, could the *elders of the gentle race* be the public—or the critics—won over by *the talk and song from tongues of lilting grace…whose sounds caress [their] ear*?

Indeed, from a musical point of view, Led Zeppelin's "Kashmir" is more genre transcending even than "Stairway to Heaven." One might call it a perfect fusion of energetic rock and Eastern trance. The story of this monumental piece can be traced back to the time just after Led Zeppelin's three concerts at Madison Square Garden, New York (July 27–29, 1973), in the little eight-track studio Jimmy Page had had installed in his manor house, Plumpton Place. "I had a song called 'Swan Song,' which was a whole piece with various different moves and moods," he explained. "It had acoustic guitar and then it went into like electric parts, then back to acoustic parts. It came out in a rather different form, years later, as 'Bird On The Wing,' a song that I did with Paul Rodgers [in 1983], but at the time it was designed to be recorded with Led Zeppelin. We did record some of the sections but not with any real conviction because it was a really complicated thing to do."[57]

Abandoned in its original form, "Swan Song" later evolved into "Kashmir" during the sessions at Headley Grange. "I had that riff that everybody knows but there was still a lot of shaping to do," said Page. "But I knew that there was something here that could work, and that really became obvious when John Bonham and I started working on it during the first days at Headley. It just seemed to come to life."[57] He added: "Nothing else sounded like 'Kashmir.' It was quite majestic, and it was just cool to be playing it."[57]

Jimmy Page with his Danelectro 3021, on stage at Earls Court Arena, London, on May 18, 1975.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

If you listen hard, the ghost of a previous melody that has not been properly erased can be heard in the left channel at the end of some phrases (at 0:26, 0:34, and 0:43).

Despite its eight-and-a-half-minute running time (since "Stairway to Heaven," DJs had become accustomed to long-drawn-out Led Zeppelin tracks), "Kashmir" received extensive airplay on both sides of the Atlantic on the release of *Physical Graffiti*. Not only that, it provided even the most skeptical critics with definitive proof of Led Zeppelin's musical alchemy, and the band's trailblazing role at the forefront of the rock scene. And the song acquired an almost spiritual dimension when it was performed live for the first time, at the Ahoy sporting arena in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, on January 11, 1975—as it would do at every concert that Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham played together, from then until their last ever show together, at the Eissporthalle in Berlin on July 7, 1980. Jimmy Page later played it on his *Outrider* tour in 1988, and again five years later, with David Coverdale, during a Japanese tour. The song was also performed by Page and Plant for MTV *Unledded* in 1994 and on the 1995–1996 world tour, and then, finally, at the legendary concert at London's O2 Arena in December 2007.

Production

The precise origins of "Kashmir" are not as apparent as they may seem. Jimmy Page later stated that his starting point was the closing passage from "Swan Song," the outtake that gave its name to the band's record label and that he subsequently rearranged, resulting in "Bird on the Wing," as explained above. In 1985 he resurrected it with his band, the Firm, under the title "Midnight Moonlight." The future Zeppelin anthem was worked up in Page's home studio. "And right at the very end of ['Swan Song']," Page explains, "I played the acoustic guitar part in reverse, and there was a sort of fanfare, or the cascades, followed by the riff, and I thought, 'Whoa,'"[96] Spurred on by his discovery, the guitarist was able to form a perfect picture of the final piece in his mind's eye, with a structure centered on Bonham's drums. Listening to "Swan Song," though, it is hard to detect where that spark came from that led to Page coming up with the brilliant "Kashmir" riff. Impatient to give shape to his new composition, it was at Headley Grange, as early as October 1973, that he recorded the first version of "Driving to Kashmir" with John Bonham, despite the absence of John Paul Jones, who was suffering from burnout and taking a break. "It's the first thing that I ran through with [Bonzo]," Page recalls, "because I just know that he is gonna love it, and he loves it, and we just play the riff over and over and over, because it's like a child's riff."[96]

Jason, son of John Bonham, later revealed that his father had been quite frustrated that journalists never regarded him as a composer, that the image people had of him as a phenomenal drummer was somewhat oversimplified. Jason, who in years to come would occasionally take his father's place in the band, gives another version of how the track came about: "It was my dad's original idea for *Kashmir*—he went to Jimmy and sang the riff to him…Jimmy himself told me that."[36] A surprising revelation, in truth, as the riff on this song is relatively complex on a harmonic level and Bonzo had never previously contributed a composition of his own devising. John Paul Jones, who missed the initial recording sessions, plays the umpire: "I don't know who got there first with 'Kashmir.' I actually wasn't present at the inception of that one so it could have been Page and Bonzo together."[36] And that is probably what happened: the combination of their ideas ultimately led to the creation of one of Led Zeppelin's greatest songs, with each of them contributing in his own way. "Basically, it was just really good to start kicking it off with him," Page confirmed, "'cause he and I worked so well together."[96] But there is no doubt it was the guitarist who, from the outset, came up with the arrangements for the song: "I always thought of that guitar part as being something that was augmented by the orchestra,"[96] he said. From its

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Come with Me" by Puff Daddy, which featured on the soundtrack for the 1998 movie *Godzilla*, directed by Roland Emmerich, is a re-creation of "Kashmir." Jimmy Page consented to Puff Daddy using it, provided he could have artistic control (and provided he was remunerated). The guitarist was also involved in the recording, with producer Tom Morello. The song made it to numbers 2, 4 and 8 in the United Kingdom, the United States, and France, respectively. The music video, in which Jimmy Page appears playing guitar, was directed by Howard Greenhalgh.

Left: John Paul Jones plays some superb Mellotron parts in "Kashmir."

Opposite: John Bonham, powerhouse and master of the groove.

inception, "Kashmir" was an ambitious creation, and it had an immediate impact on all who heard it. "I remember Bonzo playing me the demo of 'Kashmir' and Jimmy running it down on guitar for me," recalls Peter Grant. "It was fantastic."[7]

On October 25, 1973 (as indicated on companion disc two to the deluxe edition of the album), the two of them, Jimmy Page and John Bonham, laid down a demo recording of the song at Headley Grange, using the Ronnie Lane Mobile. Ron Nevison was at the desk, and Bonham's drum kit had been set up in the entrance hall, with a pair of Neumann U87s positioned on the second floor to capture it. From the moment the crash cymbal first sounds, a phasing effect is audible. Nevison explains: "On 'Kashmir,' I ran one of the two 87s through an Eventide phaser and recorded that to a third track. If you listen to the song, you can tell we ended up using that."[95] The effect he refers to is produced by the Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser, which Page had used previously, notably on "The Rover." It lends the Ludwig a hypnotic feel that marries perfectly with the spirit of the piece. Bonham's playing is incredible, his metronomic drumming unshakable despite the various rhythm changes by the other musicians, but with surprises thrown in, in the shape of unexpected restarts and incredible fills, the steady groove providing a magnetic pulse, a throbbing that all the other instruments are centered on.

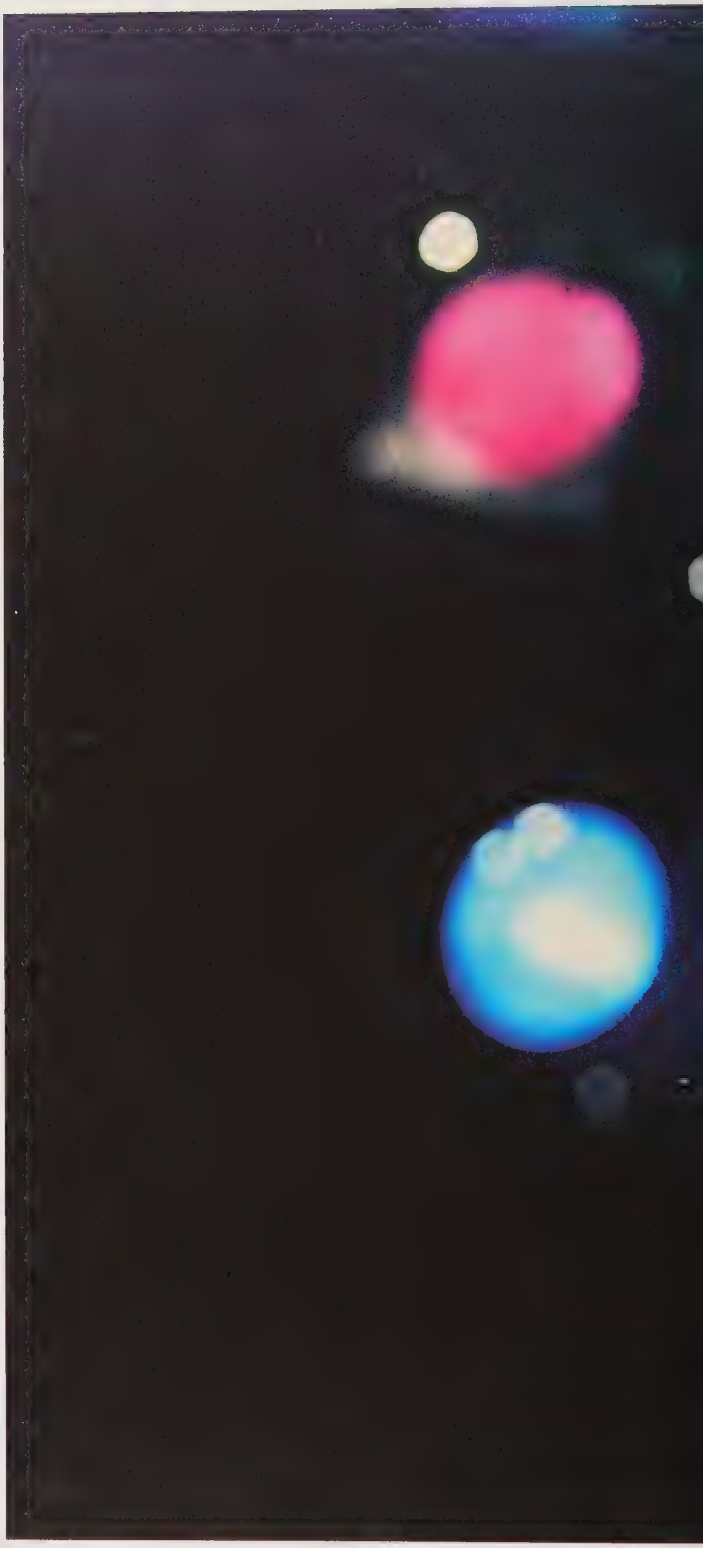
A Round

The second driving force behind "Kashmir" is of course Jimmy Page's sublime guitar part. It is most likely that he is playing his Gibson Les Paul "Number One," heavily distorted, but it is possible it could be his Danelectro 3021, as the sound very much favors the mid-range frequencies (as would be the case in concert). Whatever the case, the guitar is tuned to D A D G A D, a tuning commonly associated with folk music, and one that he had used once before, on "Black Mountain Side" on the first album. His riff is obsessive, mysterious, majestic, with an Eastern tinge to it. "Musically, it's a round," he once said, "like 'Frère Jacques,' where you can lay things on top of it."[96] He is accompanied by John Paul Jones's Jazz Bass, which was recorded as overdubs at Olympic Studios in April or May 1974. The high D he plays sets up a kind of drone. Page's guitar is also doubled by an orchestra of strings in the right-hand

channel, highlighting the staccato rhythm and epic feel of the riff.

Then Robert Plant comes in with his vocal. And what a voice! The singer seems to have grown in maturity, his voice displaying a quality and an emotion more noticeable than before. He sings with a hypnotic languor that has something of the snake charmer—the product, no doubt, of his North African experience. His performance is perfectly controlled, and, like a storyteller, he leads us step-by-step through his narrative and his visions. Jimmy Page later said that Plant had suggested to him that they try out some lyrics inspired by their stay in Morocco but that he only wrote them once the structure of the song was well defined.

After the first verse comes the famous cascade sequence, the most grandiose part of the track, reminiscent, almost, of a James Bond theme tune (from 0:53). It involves a whole orchestra of brass and strings. However, the early version of the piece did not include this, even though Jimmy Page had had it in mind since the song's conception. Peter Grant reports that when they first listened to the finished song, no one was really very happy with the result. This was probably after a first mix done at Olympic between April and May. "We were in Paris and we played it to [the managers at] Atlantic and we all thought it was a dirge," he recalls, "so Richard Cole was dispatched to Southall in west London to find a Pakistani orchestra."[7] Southall is nicknamed "Little India" because of its large Indian and Pakistani communities. But in the end, the orchestra was a British one, recorded at Olympic Studios (which were better able to accommodate an orchestra than Headley Grange) during November 1974. It was John Paul Jones, naturally, who had the job of writing the string and brass arrangements, but always under the direction of Jimmy Page, as Page himself explains: "But I said, 'John, this is what it's got to be.' I knew it, and I heard it."[16] And this was how one of the top arrangers to emerge from British studios in the sixties came to write this magnificent score, which brings an incredible epic dimension to the number. He had done it once before, for "Friends" on *Led Zeppelin III*, but this time he was writing for a real orchestra. Jimmy Page also helped to enrich the sonic feel of this passage, with two superb guitar parts, positioned in stereo, consisting of a cascading chord descent, for which he uses a guitar "which is actually electric 12-string,"[96] as he would reveal



"Kashmir" is one of Led Zeppelin's last great classics, and Robert Plant's favorite track.

In the comedy movie *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, 1982, directed by Amy Heckerling, at one point Led Zeppelin, and specifically the band's fourth album, are the subject of a conversation between the characters Mike Damone and Mark "Rat" Ratner. After failing to obtain the rights to a single song from *Led Zeppelin IV*, the director eventually settled on…"Kashmir."

to *Rolling Stone* in 2015—probably his Fender Electric XII, immortalized in "Stairway to Heaven." He also explained that this chord progression was the first element that came to him, even before the riff. When he reversed these two parts he realized that they worked better that way. "You do get some dissonance in there, but there's nothing wrong with that," he said. "At the time, I was very proud of that."[9]

After a second verse and another cascading sequence, the song takes more of a blues turn, with looser orchestration (from 2:12). Robert Plant delivers an inspired vocal in quite a high register, accompanied by the guitar, bass, and strings, which punctuate each bar with alternating glissandos and riffs. Bonham underpins the rhythm with powerful drumbeats, making the most of pauses to better accentuate his groove.

Then follows a new part with a much more exotic aura about it (from 3:21). John Paul Jones comes in on the Mellotron with the kind of string tones that are typical of the instrument, and commonly used in progressive rock, especially by Genesis (listen to the opening of "Watcher of the Skies" on *Foxtrot*, 1972). This part has a distinctly Eastern motif, which takes the song into world music territory before its time, but still in the Zeppelin style, namely rock infused, heavy, and sultry… Jones plays two Mellotron parts, supported by the orchestral brass instruments and Page's guitar. But it is Robert Plant who really shines here, with what starts as a languid, tormented vocal that he harmonizes at the end of each line before switching to a higher register and ending the passage with an almighty wail, which fades out in the reverb (from 4:13).

In the next verse, Jones adds a trombone sound to the arrangement. It is played on the Mellotron and moves around in the stereo picture (for example at 4:48, 4:56, and 5:05). The track ends with the Eastern sequence

repeated ad lib, the Mellotron accompanied by an entire orchestra, Bonham causing his snare drum to practically explode at the end of each sequence, and Robert Plant improvising his way superbly through the coda.

"Kashmir" is a song of superlatives: mesmerizing, grandiose, epic, masterful...It comes as no surprise that every member of the band ranks it among Led Zeppelin's best songs, Robert Plant even placing it at the very top of the podium. And as Jimmy Page later said: "There have been several milestones along the way. That's definitely one of them."[37] And there are evidently plenty who agree with him.

Jimmy Page playing bowed guitar again, amid the lights and smoke of Earls Court Arena.

IN THE LIGHT

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 8:47

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars, bow
John Paul Jones: bass, synthesizer, Clavinet
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Besides "Everybody Makes It Through," "In the Light" had other working titles: "In the Morning," then "Take Me Home" (no connection with the other unreleased Led Zeppelin song of the same name.

Genesis

"In the Light" is one of the recordings (captured at Headley Grange using the Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio) that contributed to a marked broadening of Led Zeppelin's musical horizons. John Paul Jones, in particular, as grand master of the keyboards, appears here as the most "progressive" member of the quartet. "John Paul came up with some fantastic things, you know," Jimmy Page once told *Musician* magazine. "The synthesizer introduction on 'In The Light' was just fantastic."[100] Indeed, the ambiance alternates between prog rock and an Eastern flavor, and it is precisely this coming together that makes "In the Light" one of the notable successes on the double album.

Robert Plant's lyrics are a perfect match for the mood of the song. The words describe a couple's troubled relationship, as they take an introspective look at themselves. The woman is pondering their future: worried, anxious, and depressed, she is sinking into despair. Her partner has experienced a listlessness of this kind before: *I know how it feels 'cause I have slipped through to the very depths of my soul*, he says. He hopes he can still help her in some way: *I would share your load.* Ultimately, he remains optimistic: *In the light you will find the road…*

Led Zeppelin never played "In the Light" in concert because it would have been impossible for John Paul Jones to replicate the studio sounds of his synthesizer. Robert Plant, though, played part of it as the intro to "Nobody's Fault but Mine" at several dates on his *Now and Zen* tour in 1988, and later performed it in its entirety at shows in Scandinavia and the United States in 2001. Jimmy Page, meanwhile, played it with the Black Crowes on his American tour in 2000.

Production

From the opening notes of the introduction, Led Zeppelin plunges us into a meditative atmosphere bathed in

John Paul Jones, keyboard maestro, with a highly inspired introduction.

Companion disc two to the deluxe edition of *Physical Graffiti* features one of the early attempts at "In the Light," entitled "Everybody Makes It Through." Recorded on February 28, 1974, it is missing the drone/synthesizer introduction of the final version. In its place is a harpsichord accompaniment played by Jones, with Plant's vocal over the top. The lyrics are different, and this was intended only as a guide vocal. The rest of the piece is relatively similar. Companion disc two to the deluxe edition of *Coda* also features an alternative mix of the song.

hypnotic sounds created by Jimmy Page, who plays his Gibson Les Paul with the aid of a bow. The result is a droning sound produced by superimposing several tracks by overdub. The sound comes through the right channel at first, before being reinforced on the left channel. One can hear the various takes following one after another to form an uninterrupted loop, with a sound much like that of a tambura. After a few seconds, John Paul Jones comes in with a solo performed on the synthesizer, featuring very prominent delay, probably generated by the Gotham Delta-T 101 digital delay (or possibly the Binson Echorec 2). It is not entirely clear what keyboard he is using; it may be a Minimoog, a Moog IIIP, or a Moog modular Model 15 connected to a Moog 952 keyboard controller. The result is ethereal, with a progressive-rock flavor, and oddly, that opening passage with its hints of the East does bear a certain resemblance to that of "Within You Without You" by the Beatles (*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967). Jimmy Page later acknowledged Jones's invaluable contribution: "I had no idea at the time that John Paul Jones was going to come up with such an amazing synthesizer intro, plus there's all the bowed guitars at the beginning as well, to give the overall drone effect."[97] In fact, this keyboard part was not part of the original plan—as is evident from the early versions of the song featured on companion disc two to the deluxe edition of the album (under its working title, "Everybody Makes It Through").

After more than a minute and a half of this heady yet oppressive ambiance, a new phrase is suddenly heard on the synthesizer, moving from right to left, and interrupting Jones's solo (at 1:42). And then Robert Plant makes his entrance, with a performance that is quite strange and unusual. He harmonizes with himself in two parts, his voice distorted by phasing from the Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser. Jimmy Page once referred to it as a voice "which to me always sounded like some choral music that I had heard from the *Music of Bulgaria*."[96] The effect is magical, particularly as the vocal is supported only by two tracks of the droning sound.

Then, at the end of the verse, John Bonham's drums suddenly explode, with support from the bass and the Gibson Les Paul; the piece now takes on a distinctly hard-rock flavor (from 2:47). Page plays a distorted riff faintly reminiscent of "Dazed and Confused," duplicated by the Jazz Bass of John Paul Jones—who also plays a Hohner Clavinet D6 part (on the left). Bonham pounds his crash cymbals before laying down a groove that enables Plant to resume his vocal, this time with more of a bluesy feel and free of any effects (from 3:02). Jones's Clavinet has been replaced by a guitar part with a distorted tone, doubled in the right-hand channel by a second Gibson, which introduces a blues-rock color.

At 4:11, the mood changes and quiet is restored. John Paul Jones, on his own, plays a chord sequence on his Clavinet with strong reverb. Bonham soon joins in with a drum fill, in which he takes the chance to test out each one of his drum skins (at 4:22), and this launches the band into a new section with a kind of English pop feel. Jimmy Page plays a melodic motif on his Les Paul, which again recalls the Beatles, and particularly the hook of "Hello Goodbye."

After going with this theme for thirty seconds or so, the band returns to the opening theme with its drone and the Moog solo, and Plant comes in again with a vocal that is harmonized and colored by phasing. Then comes the rock section, Plant performing a superb, heavily blues-tinged vocal, recalling his performances on the band's early albums, but with added maturity (from 5:28). There is then

a repeat of the sequence with the Clavinet on its own (at 6:37), and the track moves into a long Beatles-style coda, in which Page plays solos that answer each other on two tracks (but are not always very accurately aligned, as at 7:12, for example!), and Plant improvises.

"In the Light" is an ambitious number that moves through various phases, all of which had been planned from the outset, as Jimmy Page would confirm: "We knew exactly what its construction was going to be."[97] And although the song is the result of three different sequences assembled together, the overall vision gives it a real coherence, making it an incredible song, and probably one of the richest-sounding pieces Led Zeppelin ever produced.

BRON-YR-AUR

Jimmy Page / 2:07

Musician
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar
Recorded
Island Studios, London: July 1970 (Studio One)
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Bron-Yr-Aur" can be heard in the movie *The Song Remains the Same* (1976), when the four band members are traveling in their limousine to Madison Square Garden in New York. However, the instrumental did not appear on the soundtrack.

Jimmy Page plays this instrumental on a demo dating from the Welsh retreat at Bron-Yr-Aur in April–May 1970, and the laughter of little Carmen Plant can be heard in the background.

Genesis

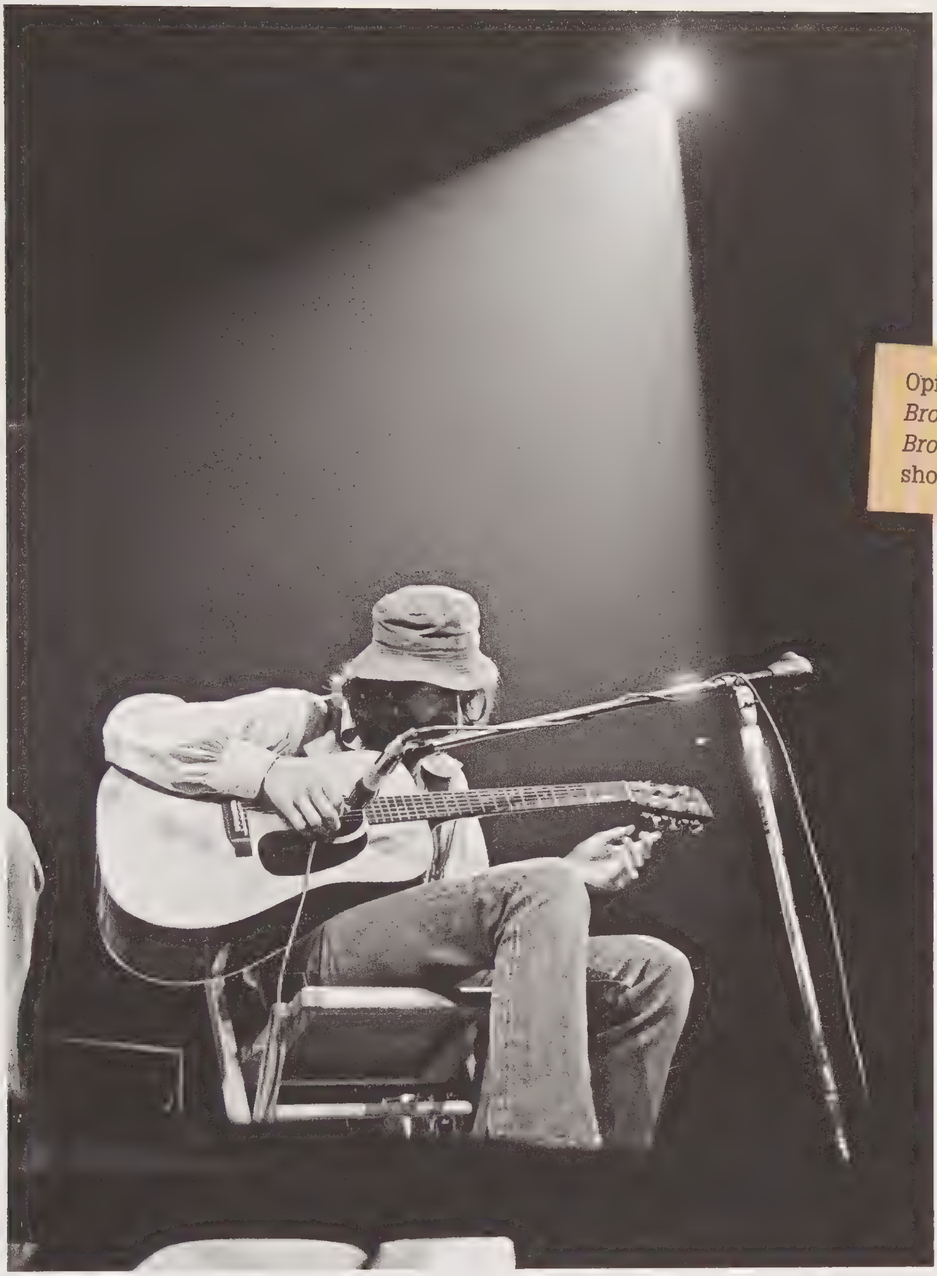
This acoustic instrumental dates back to Robert Plant and Jimmy Page's stay at a Welsh cottage in spring 1970, after Led Zeppelin's fifth American tour. "It was time to step back, take stock and not get lost in it all," Robert Plant told Cameron Crowe. "Zeppelin was starting to get very big and we wanted the rest of our journey to take a pretty level course. Hence, the trip into the mountains and the beginning of the ethereal Page and Plant. I thought we'd be able to get a little peace and quiet and get your actual Californian, Marin County blues, which we managed to do in Wales rather than San Francisco."[98]

The song, incidentally, is named after the cottage the singer and guitarist used as a retreat while writing the first chapters in the story of the band's third opus. *Bron-Yr-Aur*, as we said, means "mountain of the gold" or "golden hill," in the language of the poet Dylan Thomas. A nod to the folklore tradition of the British Isles, "Bron-Yr-Aur" was dropped from the track listing for the third album in favor of…"Bron-Y-Aur Stomp." A few years later, Jimmy Page had the bright idea of including it on *Physical Graffiti*.

Production

Contrary to the vigorous assertions of some, "Bron-Yr-Aur" is not the shortest track in Led Zeppelin's official discography, for according to the run time printed on the center label of the original vinyl albums, it lasts 2:07, whereas "Black Mountain Side" on the first LP is credited with a running time of 2:06. But when the track was burned onto CD, some of the approximations from that era were rectified. Noticeably different track start points meant that the run time for "Bron-Yr-Aur" changed from 2:07 to 2:06, whereas the duration of "Black Mountain Side" increased from 2:06 to 2:12. So it all depends on your point of view…

So "Bron-Yr-Aur" is an instrumental recorded at Island Studios by Andy Johns in July 1970 and mixed four



Opinions differ as to the pronunciation of *Bron-Yr-Aur*: Robert Plant goes for *Bromrahr*, while Welsh experts say it should be *Bron urr aye-r*.

"Bron-Yr-Aur," an acoustic track first heard during the Welsh retreat of 1970. Here, Jimmy Page on his Harmony Sovereign.

years later at Olympic Studios by Keith Harwood. Jimmy Page plays his Harmony Sovereign H1260, the guitar he had used for all the acoustic parts on *Led Zeppelin III*. This is a folk piece played by fingerpicking, the guitar in open-C6 tuning (C A C G C E), exactly as it was for "Friends," on the third album. The soothing, pastoral melody is a good reflection of the Welsh ambiance in which it was composed. Page is evidently still influenced by the same guitarists, namely Bert Jansch and Davy Graham, but while their spirit lives on in his playing, his composition does not owe anything to anyone.

He recorded one guitar part only, but a phasing or harmonizer-type effect has been applied to it, giving his instrument a stereo dimension enabling it to move around in the stereo panorama. Another sound manipulation in the form of reverse reverb can be heard on the little hook (F E C) that pops up again and again throughout the piece (at 0:14, 0:19, 0:30, 0:58, 1:04, 1:15), and likewise on the final chord (at 1:52). Interestingly, on the live versions performed in 1970, Jimmy Page introduced a few harmonic notes into his playing.

"Bron-Yr-Aur" is a really beautiful acoustic ballad, resurrected at just the right time. As Jimmy Page later commented, "We had an album and a half of new material, and this time we figured it was better to stretch out than to leave off."[37] To the delight of all, of course…This was also the last time an entirely acoustic track was ever included on a Led Zeppelin album.

DOWN BY THE SEASIDE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:15

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar, electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, keyboard
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Island Studios, London: February 1971 (Studio One)
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

For the album *Encomium: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin* (1995), Tori Amos recorded a version of "Down by the Seaside" with Robert Plant himself.

Genesis

Like "Bron-Yr-Aur," "Down by the Seaside" was conceived under the very stormy skies of Wales in spring 1970. A demo reveals Jimmy Page on his acoustic guitar, playing "Over the Hills and Far Away," "The Crunge," what would be "Down by the Seaside," and then "Gallows Pole," one after the other, in the style of the superb "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" by Crosby, Stills & Nash.

It started out, then, as an acoustic track. Its mutation into an electric folk-rock piece happened sometime later, during the sessions at Island Studios in February 1971. What was it that led to this song being dropped from *Led Zeppelin IV*? Was it the fact that John Paul Jones was not very keen on it? What we do know is that it was at Robert Plant's initiative that it was included, four years later, on the track listing for *Physical Graffiti*. Certainly, "Down by the Seaside" is one more example of the musical eclecticism of the British foursome. In this particular case it is West Coast rock that is duly celebrated by Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham. We mentioned Crosby, Stills & Nash, but this song above all recalls the Neil Young of *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* (1969), right down to its title, since "Down by the Seaside" bears echoes of "Down by the River," but also in terms of its musical atmosphere, which sounds remarkably like that of "The Loner."

Neil Young would have had no objections to Robert Plant's lyrics either. The song is an ode to nature or, more precisely, to harmony between man and nature: *Down by the seaside, see the boats go sailin'/Can the people hear what the little fish are sayin'*. Then: *Down in the city streets, see all the folk go racin', racin'*. On the one hand is the peaceful tranquility of nature, on the other, modern civilization, where *the people turned away*. For Robert Plant, there is no contest—as he lets us know: *Sing loud for the sunshine, pray hard for the rain/And show your love for lady nature*. Robert Plant's sympathy with and real interest in the ideals of

Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and Joni Mitchell: a case of déjà vu for Led Zeppelin and "Down by the Seaside"...

the sixties is well known. "Down by the Seaside" chimes with the "back to the land" philosophy beloved of the great-grandchildren of Thoreau...It has never been played onstage, though, by the Led Zeppelin four...Nevertheless, there was a reference to this track in the "Calling to You"/"Whole Lotta Love" medley played on the 1995–1996 tour.

Production

So this track, catchily named "Untitled," was one of the songs that originated from the sessions for the fourth album, (the other two being "Night Flight" and "Boogie with Stu"). "If you think about it, you couldn't have substituted anything off the fourth album with any of those tracks," Jimmy Page said later. "Each of them had their own individual charm and character."[96] It is true that "Down by the Seaside" would have seemed out of place alongside "Black Dog" and "When the Levee Breaks." The fact remains, however, that this folk-rock number possesses true quality, and has quite a quirky flavor to it for a Led Zeppelin song—although admittedly the band's fans were used to surprises by now. It was probably the Californian pop dimension to the song that caused Robert Plant's bandmates to laugh at him when he first suggested including the number on *Physical Graffiti*.

With a beat of the snare drum, John Bonham kicks off the song. The tempo is medium, the ambiance relaxed. Bonham plays a rhythm similar to a shuffle, and, as usual, lays down an excellent groove with his relatively uncluttered drumming. John Paul Jones supports him with a fairly basic bass line on his Jazz Bass, but it is his very good accompaniment on the Hohner Electra-piano

Robert Plant declares his love of West Coast rock in "Down by the Seaside."

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

Before the third refrain, at 4:01, you can hear Robert Plant singing a hurried *oh*, which seems to have been forgotten on an earlier take. It is positioned on its own on the left, and the *oh*s that follow are all in the middle of the stereo panorama.

that stands out, the sound of which is close to that of a Fender Rhodes. The piano is undoubtedly fed through an amp, which is what gives it its rich sound texture.

Jimmy Page shines throughout "Down by the Seaside" with some very good guitar parts, notably on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One," which opens the track (on the left). It is colored with very prominent tremolo, probably obtained using his Vox AC30/6, which falls away during the sung passages. His playing has a rather country-rock feel; this is particularly noticeable at the ends of the verses (for example at 0:38). He also plays a clean-sounding rhythm part, still on his Les Paul (in the right channel).

Robert Plant embarks on his lead vocal with soft, composed voice that is perfect for this ballad. We are reminded of Neil Young, of course, in terms of the ambiance, and specifically of "Down by the River," with the backing vocals appearing after each verse (for example at 0:42), which works well. He double-tracks himself, apparently singing in unison, with strong reverb. He also reinforces his vocal with overdubs on the refrains, which are rounded off with a very good lick from John Paul Jones played on the Electra-piano, typical of the Californian style (at 1:11).

At the end of the second refrain, "Down by the Seaside" slips into more of a rock mode, which has more in common with the band's usual sound (from 2:07). This sequence had been planned from the outset, as is apparent from the demo recorded at Bron-Yr-Aur in 1970. Jones and Bonham provide solid support, the Jazz Bass marking the beat with a repeated A note. Jimmy Page assumes the lion's share here, performing multiple guitar parts: he executes a hook, played clean, on the Gibson, which until that point had been reserved for the tremolo (in the left channel); he plays two rhythm parts, first on his Harmony Sovereign (likewise on the left), then with the other Gibson, which continues its accompaniment of single chords (on the right); he then takes an excellent solo, played with a fairly clean, quite aggressive sound, which wanders around in the stereo image and in the reverb, with licks typical of his playing (from 2:18); and finally, underpinning the solo, he adds a held note (from 2:21), which is distorted and drenched in reverb and has almost a vocal quality. It may be that he is using his bow here to obtain this long, sustained note, or perhaps it is achieved using the Larsen effect.

This rock sequence is followed by a bridge that, with Robert Plant's singing, has hints of the Who about it (from 2:48). The Bonham/Jones duo excels, producing a Keith Moon-style rhythm pattern supported both by Page's guitars and the keyboard of the indispensable and subtle Mr. Jones.

The last two verses provide a chance for Jimmy Page to play some solo phrases on his Gibson, and he shines once again with a highly inspired and inventive performance (listen at around 3:25). The track ends tidily on a final chord, with Plant's voice resounding in the reverb.

"Down by the Seaside" counts as a bit of fun for Led Zeppelin. All the same, regardless of the mismatch between the song and the band's image, one cannot help but acknowledge the great musicality and creativity of these four remarkable Englishmen.

TEN YEARS GONE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:55

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

During the 1977 tour, John Paul Jones played "Ten Years Gone" on a strange triple-neck guitar (comprising a six-string, a twelve-string, and a mandolin) made specially for him by Andy Manson. It was designed to enable him to weave an accompaniment rich enough to support Jimmy Page. Not content to have both hands occupied, he also played the bass parts using a bass pedal. But the complexity of the undertaking proved too much and the piece was abandoned, although the band did revisit it briefly on their 1979 tour.

Genesis

Structurally complex, "Ten Years Gone" was the product of a long process of patient trial and error by Jimmy Page in his studio at Plumpton Place. The version that he subsequently presented to the three other members of Led Zeppelin was then reworked in detail at Headley Grange.

Robert Plant's lyrics on this track are among his most intimate, as Plant himself is the subject here. Interviewed with Jimmy Page by Cameron Crowe for *Rolling Stone*, he reveals something about this song: "Let me tell you a little story behind the song 'Ten Years Gone' on our new album. I was working my ass off before joining Zeppelin. A lady I really dearly loved said, 'Right. It's me or your fans.' Not that I had fans, but I said, 'I can't stop, I've got to keep going.' She's quite content these days, I imagine. She's got a washing machine that works by itself and a little sports-car. We wouldn't have anything to say anymore. I could probably relate to her, but she couldn't relate to me. I'd be smiling too much. Ten years gone, I'm afraid."[98]

So this is Robert Plant remembering the time when he was just starting out in the world of rock, probably when he was still a member of Band of Joy. His memories are rather hazy to start with: are those *blind stars of fortune* and *wings of maybe* signs of uncertainty? It is easier to fathom Robert Plant's feelings when he likens himself to an eagle leaving the nest, who has *got so far to go*. He wonders, then: *Did you ever really want somebody/The best love you ever had?* And, by the end of the song, we come to understand that ten years have passed and that the romantically inclined narrator is still swayed by strong feelings of love: *I'm never gonna leave you…*

The producer Rick Rubin (LL Cool J, Beastie Boys, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Johnny Cash, Linkin Park…) once said that this number reminded him of "the sound of nature coming through the speakers."[24] And it came

Robert Plant in the days of Band of Joy: the passing of time, the subject of "Ten Years Gone."

across just as effectively onstage as in the studio. Led Zeppelin included "Ten Years Gone" in its set lists for the 1977 American tour, then again in 1979 (Knebworth Festival, August 4). By the time of the band's last shows in 1980, it had been dropped from their stage act. Jimmy Page and Robert Plant resurrected it for their concert in Osaka, Japan, on February 15, 1996, and Page played it with the Black Crowes on their American tours in 1999 and 2000.

Production

As with "The Rain Song," Jimmy Page had not intended to add lyrics to his new composition: "'Ten Years Gone' was originally going to be an instrumental," he explained. However, once Robert Plant had written his lyrics, Page changed his mind: "[The piece] had a certain feeling to it, a melancholy feeling [...] the theme the lyrics took was exactly along the lines I had been putting it together."[21] And he added, "Robert is very much in sympathy with

Following spread: Jimmy Page's "guitar army": the Martin D-28, Gibson EDS-1275, and Gibson Les Paul Standard.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

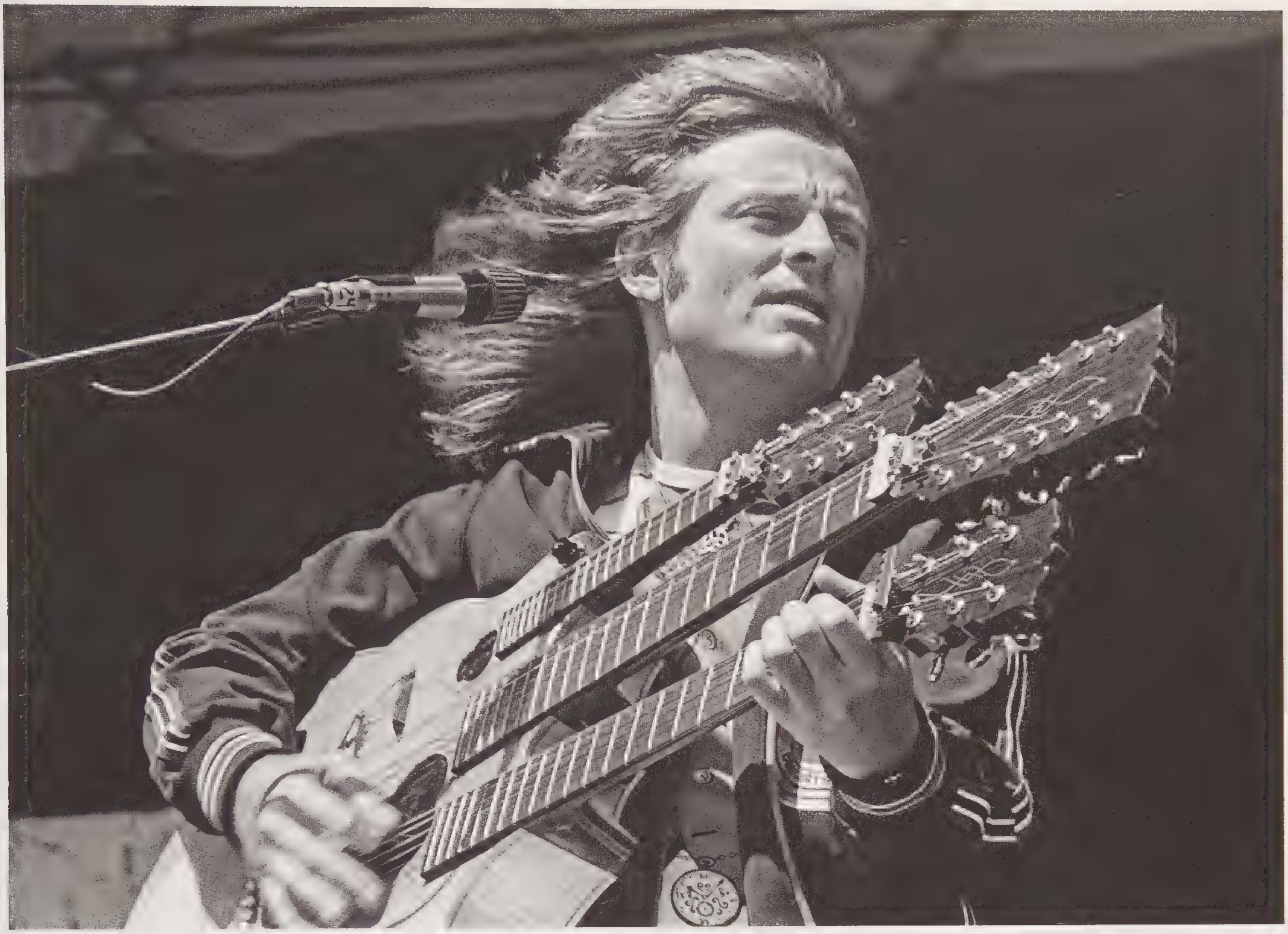
Another example of that squeaking bass drum: Bonham has it literally singing between 1:31 and 1:59! It is almost as if the effect were intentional.

the vibe of my music."[21] But before adding words to his tune, and especially before going into the studio, Page painstakingly worked up his piece in the loft of his Plumpton Place residence: "I had the whole of 'Ten Years Gone,' all of the guitar orchestration, prepared in that house."[96] And it was at Headley Grange, around February 1974, that the band got down to the recording of the backing track using the Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, equipped with its Helios console and its Studer A80 sixteen-track. The piece is a complex, ambitious one, in the same way as "Kashmir" and "In the Light" were. Some have claimed that there were fourteen guitar overdubs tracks (produced at Olympic), and that's probably not far from the truth, considering the sheer density and variety of the song's sonic texture.

One Piece, Three Themes

"Ten Years Gone" is built around three main themes, the first ethereal and romantic, played principally on the Gibson Les Paul and the bass, the second a rock theme, underpinned by the rhythm section, with the third forming a bridge. It also features two instrumental passages, the first of which includes a stunning guitar solo.

The piece begins with the first of the three themes, with Jimmy Page playing melancholy chords enhanced with generous, strong reverb. It is definitely his Fender Stratocaster Olympic White we hear, in drop-D tuning (the low E string is tuned down a tone, to D), probably fed through his Marshall 1959SLP. He is joined very soon by John Paul Jones on his Jazz Bass, and together they conjure up a wonderfully delicate and reflective ambiance. Then comes the second theme, announced by a melodic motif that recalls the "Dear Prudence" of Lennon and the Beatles. Page plays the main riff on two strings on his Strat (on the left), doubling it with a distorted part (on the right), which is in turn reinforced by a third guitar with strong mid-range frequencies—possibly his Danelectro 3021. Jones underpins this whole passage with an A note that eases the transition from one chord to the next. After a return to the first theme, Robert Plant starts out on his lead vocal with nostalgia and feeling. John Bonham comes in at the end of the verse, adding a vital pulse and setting up a fabulous groove (from 1:31). Plant, who continues with his vocal as we move into the second theme, performs his lyrics with emotion, his voice richer in texture than ever. There then follows a third verse, and Jimmy Page launches into a blazing solo, probably on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" (from 2:30). He avoids any showy demonstration of his technical prowess, instead giving a real lesson in feeling, in an ambiance that owes much to Californian jazz rock. His playing is magnificent and melodic, and every single note is genuinely felt. Page colors his guitar with powerful phasing coming, presumably, from his Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser. He is supported by the incomparable rhythm section of the Jones/Bonham duo, each of them delivering a perfect, syncopated swing performance that is both rich and inventive. The end of the solo marks the beginning of the bridge, Robert Plant resuming his lead vocal with a hoarse-textured rock voice (starting at 3:21). Page accompanies him with three guitar parts: two guitars perform a distorted melody line (on the left and in the center), and they are answered by a third, playing chords that ring out in the right channel. Then comes the second instrumental section. Page plays a melodic theme, harmonizing with this, apparently on two guitars (rather than one), still with very pronounced phasing. He plays a rhythm pattern on his Strat (on the left), adding a counterpoint in the form of two melody lines harmonized in two parts, the one opposite the other in the stereo field. Their sound is heavily colored by an



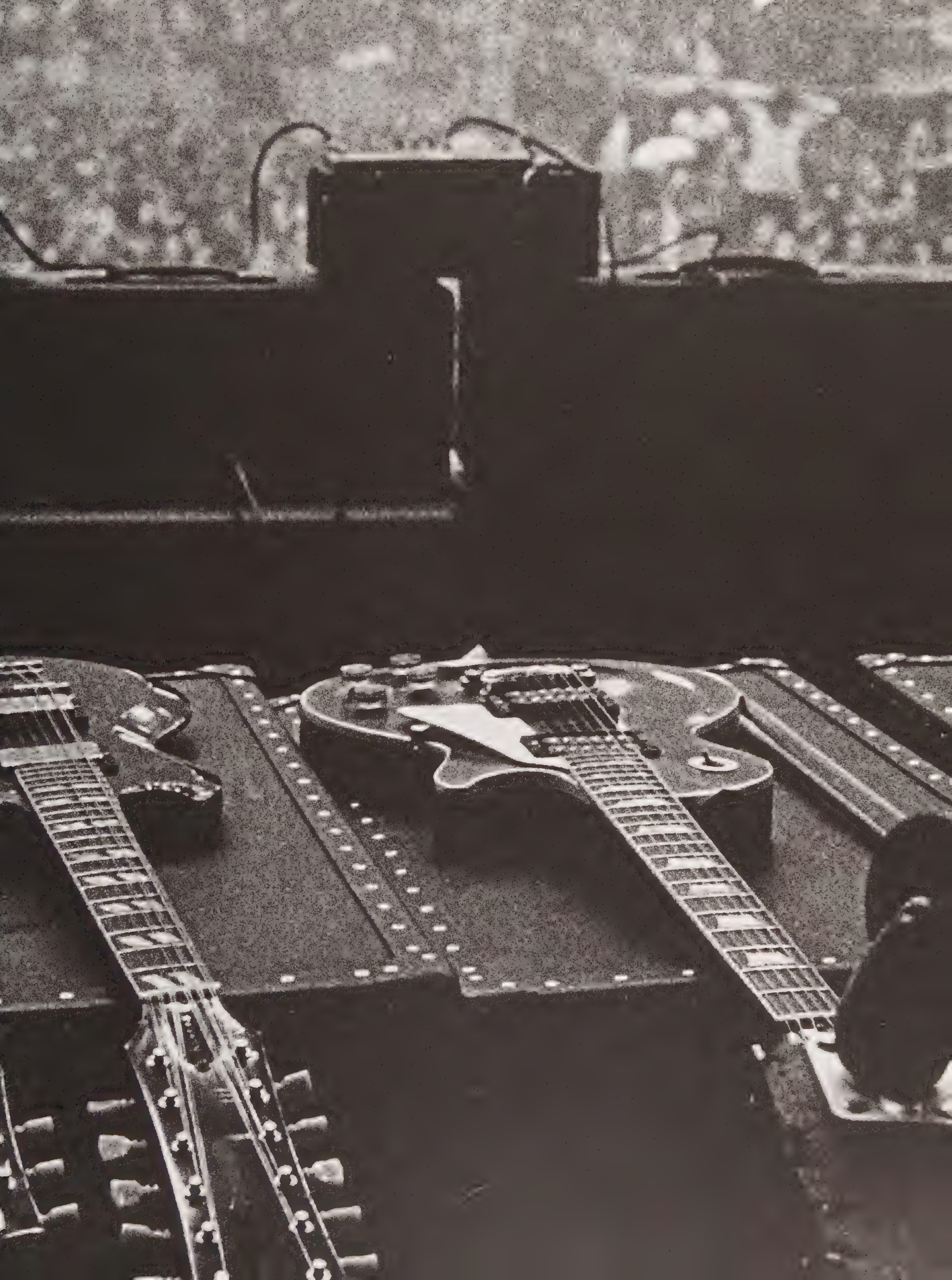
John Paul Jones in concert in Oakland on July 23, 1977, with his Andy Manson triple-neck, supporting Jimmy Page on "Ten Years Gone."

effect that, most likely, is a result of phasing, although it could be a Leslie speaker cabinet (from 3:57). There are no less than five guitars in this passage, each one playing a different part from the others!

Page continues in the same fashion with a return to the second theme and a buildup of guitars, though these are never overpowering (starting at 4:06). He plays the riff on his Strat (on the left), and this is duplicated (on the right) and reinforced, a little later, with what is probably his Danelectro 3021, although the tone is reminiscent of that of a sitar, so it may come from a Danelectro Coral sitar (at 4:15 in the right-hand channel). He then enriches the orchestration even more by playing the riff an octave higher, with two guitars harmonized with one another and placed in stereo (Gibson?) Once again, we have at least five or six guitars playing together, an "army of guitars," as he himself put it. .

Robert Plant sings the vocal on this sequence, before returning to the first theme with its pared-down arrangement, with a single guitar and a bass (from 4:46). The track ends with a long and absolutely sensational coda based on the second theme, Jimmy Page's multiple guitar layers complementing each other brilliantly. Bonham and Jones play their part here too, providing excellent support, as does Robert Plant, with a voice that seems to become hoarser and hoarser, yet how divine it is! (Listen at 5:12 or from 5:35.) He also sings two parts superimposed in an apparently improvised mix (from 5:55). Jimmy Page also recorded a slide guitar part (at 6:03), played much in the style of George Harrison—perhaps in keeping with the harmony on the second theme, which has a strong Beatles flavor.

"Ten Years Gone" is one of the successes on the album. This incredible number is up there with the band's greatest songs, and showcases the talents of the composer, guitarist, arranger, and producer that is Jimmy Page.



Is Robert Plant singing about a nuclear apocalypse in "Night Flight"?

NIGHT FLIGHT

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:37

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, organ, piano (?)
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971
Island Studios, London: February 1971

Mixing

Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

If you listen carefully, you will hear, at 1:55, a voice uttering a discreet *ahhhh* at the beginning of Robert Plant's vocal. A few seconds later (at 1:58), his words are also interrupted by three more breathed *ahs*.

Genesis

This song came about during Led Zeppelin rehearsals at the time of the sessions at Headley Grange in January 1971 for the production of the fourth album. It was then put aside before being resurrected for *Physical Graffiti*. *I received a message from my brother across the water/ He sat laughin' as he wrote the end's in sight*: What does Robert Plant mean by this? Is he talking about some evil that is about to devastate the planet? A nuclear apocalypse, for example, synonymous with the end of the world?

The central figure says he has to leave: *I said goodbye to all my friends/And packed my hopes inside a matchbox...Just n' someone pushed a gun into my hand/Tell me I'm the type of man to fight the fight that I'll require.* Is he talking about heading off to war? Next he addresses his mother, and again he is saying his goodbyes: *They're knockin' down them doors/ They're trying to take me away.* It seems the figure in the song has decided to escape conscription, and that he is fleeing those who want to make him put on a uniform. Is it anti-militarist rant or Robert Plant haunted by paranoia? Some have also seen this *night flight* as an impressionistic evocation of a romantic encounter: *Make me feel alright. Fly now, baby...*

Led Zeppelin never played "Night Flight" in concert—only at the sound check for the concert in Chicago on July 6, 1973. Some twenty years later, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant performed it at a concert they played at the University of London on October 30, 1998, and Robert Plant played it again on his solo tour of Scandinavia and the United States in 2001.

Production

"Night Flight," the first track on the fourth side of the album, had been recorded four years previously, alongside songs like "Black Dog" and "Stairway to Heaven." Its origins are not obvious, though: while it is extremely

Protest by the Weathermen in Chicago: At odds with western society, much like the figure in "Night Flight."

well crafted, it is different in character from the songs of that era, with its blend of English pop, boogie-woogie, and rock.

A rarity: the song starts with the sound of the hi-hat played by John Bonham on his own, before the rest of the band joins in. Jimmy Page plays a rhythm guitar part on his Gibson Les Paul, probably colored by Leslie speaker cabinet (on the left); John Paul Jones is on his Fender Jazz Bass, but he provides an accompaniment on the Hammond C-3 organ as well, which is also modulated by a Leslie (on the right); Bonham continues his hi-hat/bass drum pattern before adding in his snare drum in the middle of the first verse; finally, Robert Plant delivers an excellent vocal that reminds us of his dazzling form in 1971.

The first verse is in the "Brit rock" vein, with echoes of the Who or even the Spencer Davis Group. The sound that most stands out is of course that of Jones's Hammond C-3, its tone noticeably distorted. It seems likely that Jones was also the main composer, as the influence of Jimmy Page is not as apparent as usual. The latter remains relatively low profile throughout the piece, after the festival of guitars he has treated us to elsewhere on the album…He plays a mix of chords and licks on his Les Paul, and is supported by Jones's bass, which literally clings to Bonham's bass drum.

The refrain that follows is more blues rock, with almost a boogie-woogie feel, with Page playing—on two strings—one of the most recognizable hooks in guitar rock (from 0:21). Bonham supports his bandmates with, as always, some very effective drumming, which, along with the bass, gives the piece its essential groove. All the same, it is strange that his Ludwig does not have the same "live" tonality as it does on some tracks, despite the fact that it was recorded at Headley Grange. It sounds rather flat here, as if it had been recorded in a more

Jeff Buckley produced an excellent version of "Night Flight."

conventional studio. As for Plant, we sense that he is enjoying his performance, varying the effects, as on the last word of the refrain, where he breaks into a falsetto voice, finishing the refrain in strong reverb (at 0:39).

After an instrumental break that is actually a repeat of the introduction, Robert Plant embarks on the next verse and refrain with power and feeling (starting at 0:59). His performance is exquisite, his voice high-pitched, with an adrenaline-fueled rock vibe. Bonham pounds his Ludwig energetically, and John Paul Jones delivers an excellent bass line, very bright and rhythmic, played at the top of the neck. Then, moving into the bridge, Plant sings a cappella in the best rhythm 'n' blues tradition (at 1:41). The band picks up his phrase, then gives him a second solo spell on the microphone (at 1:55), before continuing into a blues-rock sequence. Note that, at the end of Plant's second a cappella contribution, some opening notes can be heard in the left channel, played by an instrument that seems to be an acoustic piano (at 1:58). The track carries on with a last verse and final refrain, repeated several times until the song reaches its end.

"Night Flight" might not blow you away, but it is still a good track, on which Robert Plant in particular stands out. Quite different in character from the other tracks on the album, it serves as another example of Led Zeppelin's eclecticism.

COVER

Jeff Buckley recorded a highly personal version of "Night Flight," which appears on the compilation *You and I* (2016).

THE WANTON SONG

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:10

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass (?), Clavinet
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974

Mixing

Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Who is the *silent woman* who appears in the night? Could this be another implicit reference to the evil one, or more specifically to a succubus? The mystery remains…

Genesis

"The Wanton Song" features one of Jimmy Page's many infectious riffs. When did he come up with it? Interestingly, Led Zeppelin played a fragment of it at the sound check for the concert in Chicago on July 6, 1973. It is also known that the guitarist reworked it at Plumpton Place, before fine-tuning it at rehearsals and recording sessions at Headley Grange in February 1974.

"A riff can take on the aspect of a refrain in a listener's psyche," Robert Plant explained. "When that happens, the whole song becomes one big refrain. The idea of a hypnotic riff as the prime mover of a piece of music has been around for a long time, whether you're talking about the Delta blues or music from Middle Eastern and African cultures."[9] That is precisely the case in "The Wanton Song" (as in "Black Dog" on *Led Zeppelin IV*), as Jimmy Page confirmed in an interview for *Guitar World*: "As far as I'm concerned, the riff in Led Zeppelin's 'The Wanton Song,' for example, is the refrain. It could go on for a half an hour and I would be completely riveted and satisfied. It's so powerful and concise that it never gets boring."[99]

The word *wanton* means licentious or depraved, which at least is clear enough. The lyrics, on the other hand, are much less straightforward. Or rather they are a mini masterpiece of double entendres. Indeed these lyrics mark Robert Plant as one of the best songwriters of his generation: *Silent woman in the night, you came/Took my seed from my shaking frame…Kiss my nightmares, my lovin' gun…Lose my senses, lose command/Feel your healing rivers run*. At the end of the song it seems that the lover is looking for a new mistress to satisfy his longings: *Feel my fire needs a brand new flame…*

"The Wanton Song" was first played live at the Led Zeppelin concerts in Rotterdam on January 11 and 12, 1975, then again on the first leg of their tenth American tour (January 18–February 16). It was then dropped from the set lists. In 2000, Jimmy Page performed it again

Living up to his image and his talent: John Bonham, a formidable drummer on "The Wanton Song."

with the Black Crowes, both on their tour and in the TV studio for *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*.

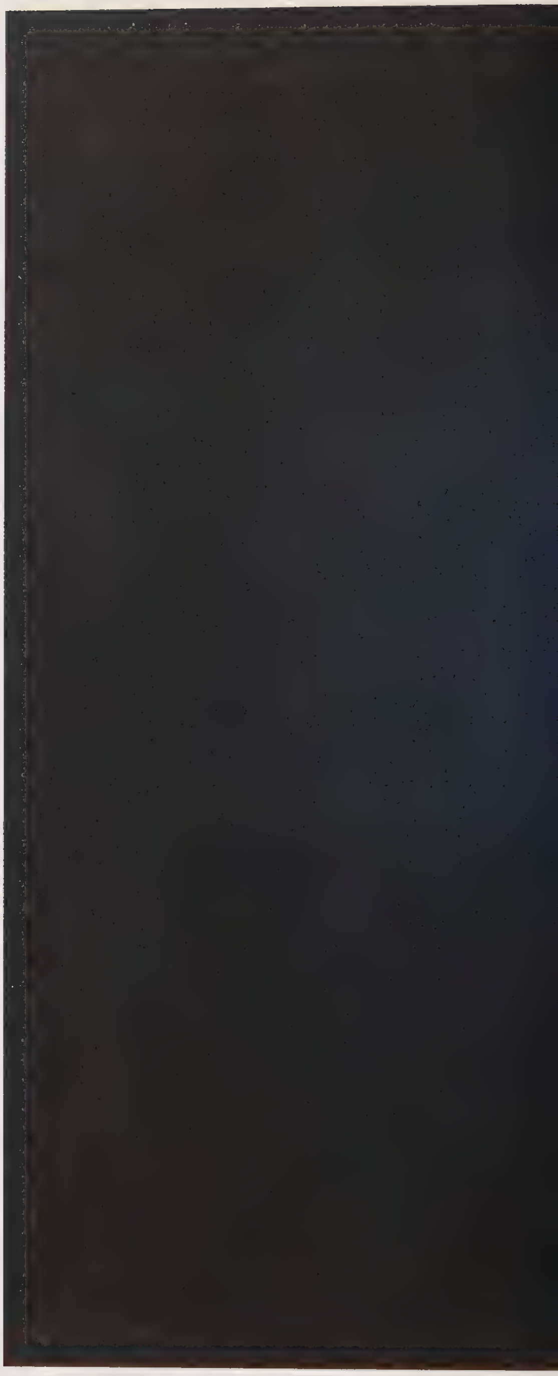
Production

"The Wanton Song" had the working title "Desire," which is one way of announcing the mood of the piece, both in terms of lyrics and music. And what better way to express this mood, musically, than with a nice, juicy hard-rock riff? This riff forms a common thread through the entire number, these few notes—as Jimmy Page suggested (above)—serving as a worthy substitute for a refrain. The guitarist basically composed it around two notes: a low G and a G an octave higher. The rhythm pattern is similar in a way to "Immigrant Song," but Page ends it with a descent in fifths, which sets it apart. He plays his Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One," the sound probably distorted by his Marshall 1959SLP and Marshall 1982 combo.

He is accompanied by bass tones that, to be honest, are hard to identify. Companion disc two of the deluxe edition of *Coda* features the rough mix of "Desire," dated February 15, 1974. And on this recording we find that there is no bass, but only a Hohner Clavinet D6 played by John Paul Jones. On the version that appears on *Physical Graffiti*, the Clavinet has gone, apparently replaced by a bass sound. Actually, it seems the Clavinet part is still present, but buried deep in the mix, and that a real bass or a synthesizer has been added to lend weight to it. But it is not a case of the Clavinet playing on its own in a low register.

Completing the power trio, we have, of course, John Bonham on the drums. Even if "The Wanton Song" is based mainly on Jimmy Page's riff, Bonzo's drumming, which is extraordinary, is the other crucial component of the piece. Bonham pumps his Ludwig with the same impressive power as ever, infusing the track with that groove he does so well, a blend of R&B, rock, and funk. Recorded at Headley Grange by Ron Nevison in the entrance hall that went down in history after his take on "When the Levee Breaks," his drums have a fat, "live" sound, with that very particular coloring the guitarist liked so much. One also cannot help noticing one of the

"The Wanton Song," a hard-rock track composed by Jimmy Page that recreates the magic of the first two albums.



The riff on "The Wanton Song" may well have served as the inspiration for the band Rainbow, who more or less recycled it in their song "Lady of the Lake" in 1978 (on the album *Long Live Rock 'n' Roll*).

characteristic features of Bonham's playing: he constantly shadows Page's guitar, clings to his riffs, and systematically backs them up on the snare drum. That's one of the ingredients of the Led Zeppelin sound.

Robert Plant regards "The Wanton Song" as one of his favorite Zeppelin tracks. And it shows in his singing as, right from the first verse, he delivers an exhilarating vocal performance in an electrifying rock voice. He finds his vocal bearings again, rediscovering the qualities that place him among the best rock singers of all time: singing in a high vocal range, with a hoarse texture to his voice. Even if his voice no longer has the same power as in the early days, Plant has gained in maturity: from now on he plays with his lyrics, something that is particularly noticeable on this recording.

An instrumental sequence consisting of two parts follows the first two verses (starting at 0:58). In the first part, Jimmy Page embarks on a rich harmonic progression, based largely on diminished seventh chords. He records two guitar tracks with his Les Paul, the sound distorted, with the two tracks positioned in stereo. The problem is that they are not quite in tune, and some of the chords sound discordant, which is regrettable (listen at 1:02). In the second part he plays a melody line,

which he alternates with funky motifs to great effect, still on two guitars (from 1:07). The first, which is on the left, is definitely colored by vibrato from a Leslie speaker cabinet; the second, on the right, is simply distorted. And at the end of this sequence, a link involving backward echo, recorded on two tracks, leads us on to the next verse (at 1:22).

The track continues in this way, with two more verses and a new instrumental passage, the guitars, unfortunately, still mismatched…Then Jimmy Page launches into a solo on his Les Paul, its sound highly colored by his Leslie (starting at 2:28). Although his playing here is highly commendable, the solo never really takes off, leaving listeners rather unsatisfied.

In the last verse, Page doubles his riff on two tracks, Bonham inserts a superb rhythmic lick at 3:32, and Plant ends the song with a wild-animal cry, which is allowed to die out in the reverb (at 3:55).

"The Wanton Song" takes us back to the hard-rock alchemy of Led Zeppelin's early days, which probably explains the particular affection it holds for Page, Plant… and the fans.

BOOGIE WITH STU

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, Ian Stewart, Mrs. Valens / 3:45

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar
John Paul Jones: mandolin
John Bonham: drums, percussion
Ian Stewart: piano
Unidentified Musicians: hand claps

Recorded

Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: January 1971

Mixing

Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

This jaunty piano blues number dates from January 1971, after Ian “Stu” Stewart brought the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio to Headley Grange for the sessions for the fourth album. The only piece involving Stewart—ex-pianist of the Rolling Stones, later relegated to the status of a mere session man and roadie—to be retained on that fourth LP was “Rock and Roll.” The track destined to become “Boogie with Stu” had been discarded at the time. Happily, the recording found itself back in favor when the Led Zeppelin four along with Peter Grant started putting together the double album.

“At Headley Grange there was this old piano that had fallen into a state of disrepair and was almost unplayable,” Jimmy Page recalls. “It was so bad, we never even thought to use it. But Ian came in and just started improvising this amazing lick on it. So I went over to him and I did my best to tune my guitar to the piano, and the other guys started playing tambourine, handclaps, and stomping in the hallway, and before you knew it, we had recorded ‘Boogie with Stu.’”[9]

The story doesn’t end there…At Headley Grange, as Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, and Stu Stewart were busy re-creating the frenetic ambiance of the barrelhouses of the Deep South, Robert Plant grabbed a microphone and began to improvise as well. Or, more precisely, he borrowed some of the lyrics of “Ooh My Head,” a song that appears on the first album of the singer and pioneer of the Chicano rock movement Ritchie Valens (eponymous, 1959). So in the first verse, Valens’s lines *Well, well, now, now baby/Let’s just go all night long* or *There won’t be no tutti-frutti* are transformed by Plant into *Playin’ in town, baby/We just gotta rock on* and *I don’t want no tutti-frutti, no lollipop.* “Boogie with Stu” encapsulates all the timeless energy of rock ’n’ roll, delivered in a little under four minutes, with, as always, some highly charged erotic references. It is a warm, enthusiastic piece bathed in an alcoholic haze! A

Ian Stewart, the boogie-woogie pianist, English-style.

telling detail: "Boogie with Stu" was originally entitled "Sloppy Drunk"…

The Valens Affair

Ritchie Valens died on February 3, 1959, in the same plane crash that also claimed the lives of Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper—*the day the music died*, as Don McLean would sing some ten years later in "American Pie." Valens's mother was (generously) credited as the composer of "Boogie with Stu," which is why her name appears alongside those of the four Led Zeppelin members and Ian Stewart. In 1979, Valens's heirs sued the band for the royalties they believed they were owed. Jimmy Page reacted bitterly: "What we tried to do was give Ritchie's mother credit because we heard she never received any royalties from any of her son's hits, and Robert did lean on that lyric a bit. So what happens? They tried to sue us for all of the song!! We had to say bugger off. We could not believe it. So anyway, if there is any plagiarism, just blame Robert [laughs]!"[4]

Production

When Ian Stewart sits down at the piano, he doesn't play just any kind of music: it has to be boogie-woogie, rock

If Robert Plant blithely drew on the lyrics from "Ooh My Head" for "Boogie with Stu," Ritchie Valens, in turn, was heavily inspired by "Ooh! My Soul," recorded by Little Richard in 1957.

Ritchie Valens, pioneer of Latino rock 'n' roll and performer of "La Bamba" and "Ooh My Head."

'n' roll, or blues, and always with chords in a major key. That's because this incredible pianist, with a backstory that is strange to say the least, regarded minor chords as "fucking Chinese music" and refused to play them—which ruled him out of a lot of the Stones songs! But the fact that "Boogie with Stu" subsequently came about at his initiative must have given him some satisfaction. It is thanks to the double album format that this song appears on the band's sixth opus, as Jimmy Page confirmed: "It seemed like a good time to do that sort of thing, release tracks like 'Boogie With Stu' which we normally wouldn't be able to do."[37]

The song opens with a drum pattern. In fact, John Bonham plays the exact same rhythm all the way to the end, prefiguring the electronic drum loops that would start appearing at the end of the seventies. He uses only his bass drum, a tambourine, probably mounted on his hi-hat, and a hard surface that is hard to identify, which he hits with his drumsticks. The whole sound is colored by short reverb and a short delay. After four bars, Jimmy Page's guitar and Ian Stewart's piano make their entrance simultaneously. Jimmy plays a rhythm pattern, alternating it with strumming on an acoustic guitar—likely to be his Harmony Sovereign H1260 (on the left)—and Stu throws himself into his boogie-woogie accompaniment with a fervor and a technique that Johnnie Johnson would have approved of (on the right). The piece swings, and one senses the musicians are really enjoying themselves. That becomes even more apparent when Robert Plant launches into a very high-pitched lead vocal, at times reminiscent of "Rock and Roll" from the fourth album. His melody line is a sort of compilation of all the classic clichés of the genre, from Little Richard to Elvis, via Gene Vincent and company. But the energy and enthusiasm he brings to it make it an excellent performance. After two verses, John Paul Jones comes in on the mandolin, executing a very

Led Zeppelin during their European tour in spring 1973, at London's Heathrow airport, before returning to the United States.

good solo on his C. F. Martin A-style (at 1:12). Companion disc two to the deluxe edition of the album features a mix produced at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles—the studios that cost Andy Johns his place—on which he starts improvising right from the opening. But on *Physical Graffiti*, his interventions are limited to two solos, the second appearing at 2:38. It is noteworthy that there is no bass on this. Next comes a passage reserved for Stu, who works the keys of his piano with diligence, boogie-woogie oozing from his very being (from 1:35). Robert Plant follows him, launching into a string of *hey babes*, in which some might hear echoes of "Hey-Hey-Hey-Hey" by Little Richard, which came out in 1958 (starting at 1:56).

The number continues with hand claps to reinforce the beat (from 2:40), Jones's second mandolin solo and Plant's storming vocal. As the song draws to a close, we are left with nothing but a rhythm pattern played by Bonham, which is repeated several times until the end of the song (from 3:23). A word about this pattern: it is very likely a magnetic loop, in other words a sequence recorded on analog tape, which has been copied several times and then edited together. It is quite obvious on this coda, because there is a noise, probably the sound of an object hitting one of the mics, that recurs at regular intervals (for example at 3:26, 3:32, and 3:38 on the right). To round off this pattern, Bonzo adds (presumably by overdub) a concluding fill that is not a complete success, at 3:43. The recording ends with laughter from all the musicians.

Although some have suggested that Led Zeppelin's decision to include "Boogie with Stu" on *Physical Graffiti* was no more than a kind gesture toward the sixth Rolling Stone, the fact remains that the song stands as a refreshing bit of fun on a dense album, revealing, once again, their sincere shared fondness for classic rock 'n' roll and its variants.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMAN

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:30

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitar
John Paul Jones: mandolin
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 1972
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Eddie Kramer
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

A voice can be heard in the background at 1:32. This is undoubtedly Bonzo, who says something just before launching into his bass drum part.

Genesis

"Black Country Woman" is an acoustic blues number: the kind of song the members of Led Zeppelin liked to play and record from time to time. It was originally titled "Never Ending Doubting Woman Blues" in reference to the words with which Robert Plant concludes the song: *What's the matter with you, mama*, and the half-spoken phrase *never-ending, nagging, doubting woman blues*, which was dropped during recording. Presumably for the sake of simplicity, the song was rechristened "What's the Matter Here," and eventually "Black Country Woman," in reference to the Black Country, the mining region in the English Midlands (Birmingham, Wolverhampton) that was home to the Led Zeppelin front man and drummer.

The lyrics seem to be the words of a man angry at a vulgar, mean mother who is essentially not very likable: *You didn't have to make me a total disgrace...You didn't have to leave me with that beer in my face*. The second verse carries on in the same vein: *Hey baby, why you treat me mean...You didn't have to tell me I was just your kid*. And so on, all the way to the end. Is it definitely a sour-tempered mother who is the subject here? There are also hints that this could be a series of digs by a rejected, humiliated husband or lover directed at a wife or mistress who has become insanely possessive: *You didn't have to crucify me like you did*.

"Black Country Woman" was chosen as the B-side of the only single taken from *Physical Graffiti* (with "Trampled Under Foot" on the A-side). Led Zeppelin played this song live during their 1975 and 1977 tours, notably as a medley with "Bron-Y-Aur Stomp."

Production

"Black Country Woman" had been captured on tape in May 1972 during the sessions for *Houses of the Holy*. The recording took place not inside Mick Jagger's manor, but outside, in the grounds of Stargroves. "I can't recall whose idea it was to go outside," sound engineer Eddie

Robert Plant, a blond-haired rock 'n' roll angel from the Black Country in the Midlands.

Kramer commented, "but I was always into experimenting, and as soon as it was suggested I was off out with the microphones."[74] One of the downsides of recording outdoors: at the very beginning of the song, one can hear the sound of an airplane engine. Just before, Eddie Kramer asks, "Shall we roll, Jimmy?" And Jimmy Page replies, "We're rolling on..." Other voices: "What?... one?" "No, one again." Then: "Gotta get this airplane off." And Robert Plant replies, "Nah, leave it, yeah." John Paul Jones later made this revealing comment about the mood of the band, who always favored feeling over technical perfection: "We were always happy to leave that sort of thing in rather than lose a good take."[47]

So "Black Country Woman" was recorded with them sitting on the grass. Apparently, Eddie Kramer decided to record the string instruments and Robert Plant's vocal separately. Therefore it was probably Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones who got down to work first. The track starts with Jimmy's acoustic guitar: he is playing his Martin D-28 in open-G tuning (D G D G B D). The figure he performs is a blend of folk and blues that evokes the ambiance on the acoustic side of *Led Zeppelin III*. He is

Led Zeppelin unplugged. "Black Country Woman" is an acoustic blues number with vitriolic lyrics.

soon joined, at the end of the third bar, by John Paul, who accompanies him on his C. F. Martin A-style mandolin. His playing knits together with the guitar, and the combination of the two instruments works wonderfully. Despite this highly folk-infused coloring, "Black Country Woman" remains at its heart a Zeppelinesque acoustic blues number. Robert Plant makes his entrance in a fairly soft, plaintive voice. Short reverb has been applied to his vocal, and it is hard to believe that the recording was done outdoors. Eddie Kramer later explained, however, that he had wanted to capture a sound consistent with that of the acoustic instruments. And indeed, at the very end of the song, after Plant's last word just before the fade-out, the sound of birdsong can just about be made out (at 4:21 on the right).

In the second verse, John Bonham makes a conspicuous entry on his bass drum only (at 1:33). He marks each beat, and his intervention brings the piece to life. In this case, it was not possible to record his drums in the open air: the timbre of his bass drum would have been different without the "live" resonance characteristic of a reverberating space. So it was in the conservatory adjoining the main building that Eddie Kramer would have recorded it, in the same way as for the other tracks on *Houses of the Holy* that he oversaw in May 1972. And the take must have been done simultaneously with the acoustic instruments for it to be so perfectly in time with them, and not be picked up by their respective microphones. This is all the more apparent at the end of the second verse, when Bonham adds in his snare drum and hi-hat (from 2:10). Oddly, the band decided not to add a bass guitar in support of his Ludwig "Green Sparkle." It was a production decision. It meant the song retained its acoustic character while still benefiting from Bonzo's phenomenal drumming.

At the end of the third verse, Robert Plant comes in on the harmonica for the first time (from 3:01). His playing is excellent, and his blues phrasing incredible, reinforced by very prominent reverb. Between Band of Joy and his brief collaboration with Alexis Korner during the pre-Zeppelin period, he had the opportunity to really come to grips with the techniques required to play this instrument. His harmonica is obviously recorded on a different track from his lead vocal, since he can be heard singing during his harmonica solo (for example at 3:02 or 3:06). It must be an overdub. Was it

recorded outdoors or inside Stargroves manor? Probably outdoors. After a final verse, which he sings with greater force this time—much like Bonham, who reinforces his rhythm with blows of the crash cymbal powerful enough to fell an ox—he ends the track with a second harmonica solo laden with feeling and just as excellent as before. Jimmy Page concludes his performance with a blues guitar hook, but it is Robert Plant who has the last word as he sings the final line a cappella with plenty of reverb. (It is at this point that one can make out the sound of birds singing.)

"Black Country Woman" is one of the successes of *Physical Graffiti*. A number that would have been more at home, style-wise, on the band's third or fourth album, it is easy to see why it was dropped from *Houses of the Holy*, as, at that time, Led Zeppelin was keen to strike out in new musical directions.

SICK AGAIN

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:40

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Ronnie Lane Mobile Studio, Headley Grange, Hampshire: February 1974
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Mixing
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: April–May 1974
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineers: Ron Nevison, Keith Harwood
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

From the window of your rented limousine, I saw your pretty blue eyes/One day soon you're gonna reach sixteen, painted lady in the city of lies. When he wrote "Sick Again," Robert Plant was thinking of the numerous groupies whom he had come across, in particular on Led Zeppelin's American tours in the first half of the seventies. *Painted lady* is a colorful expression used to refer to prostitutes. And the *city of lies* is none other than Los Angeles, the entertainment capital where so many dreams of glory are shattered. In the interview he gave to Cameron Crowe for *Rolling Stone*, the Led Zeppelin singer declared: "It's a shame to see these young chicks bungle their lives away in a flurry and rush to compete with what was in the old days the goodtime relationships we had with the GTOs and people like that."[98] The singer goes on: "If you listen to 'Sick Again,' a track from *Physical Graffiti*, the words show I feel a bit sorry for them."[98]

So for this final track on the double album, Robert Plant spares a fond, even compassionate thought for all the groupies, those teenagers who trail around Hollywood or Santa Monica: *Through the circus of the LA queens/How fast you learn the downhill slide.* The ones with *lips like cherries and the brow of a queen.* Musically, "Sick Again" contrasts sharply with all the other songs on *Physical Graffiti*, and even with those on the previous albums. Indeed this is Led Zeppelin's one and only venture into glam rock (metal glam), which until that point had been the exclusive preserve of T. Rex, David Bowie, and Roxy Music. The quartet performed this song onstage during their 1975 and 1977 tours, then at a number of shows in 1979. Jimmy Page later played it with the Black Crowes in 1999 and 2000.

Production

Companion disc two to the deluxe edition of the album features one of the early versions of "Sick Again,"

Above: Jimmy Page at Rodney Bingenheimer's English Disco on Sunset Boulevard, accompanied by his girlfriend, Miss Pamela (Pamela Des Barres).

Below: Groupies (among them Sable Starr, in the rear of the limousine) arriving at Rodney Bingenheimer's English Disco.

TAX SERVICE
Pizza Man

recorded on October 25, 1973, at Headley Grange. It is an instrumental that we can assume was played solely by Jimmy Page and John Bonham, John Paul Jones being absent due to extreme fatigue. Although the hard-rock spirit is already present and predominant on this version, the introduction is different from the one on the final version. For on the final track of *Physical Graffiti*, Jimmy Page gets the song under way with a distorted riff executed on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" and recorded in stereo—a riff strangely reminiscent of that of "I'm Free" by the Who (*Tommy*, 1969). But very soon the guitarist, backed by Bonzo's drums and Jones's bass, launches into a heavy rhythm, which Robert Plant settles into. The voice of the Led Zeppelin singer is undermixed, which is a shame, as he gives an extremely good performance in a hard-rock voice that is just right, though it does not have the same power and texture as on the early albums.

"Sick Again" is an odd track in that, on the verses, Page plays the song's main riff at the end of each of

Robert Plant and John Bonham, surrounded by young groupies in Los Angeles. It is they who are in the spotlight in "Sick Again."

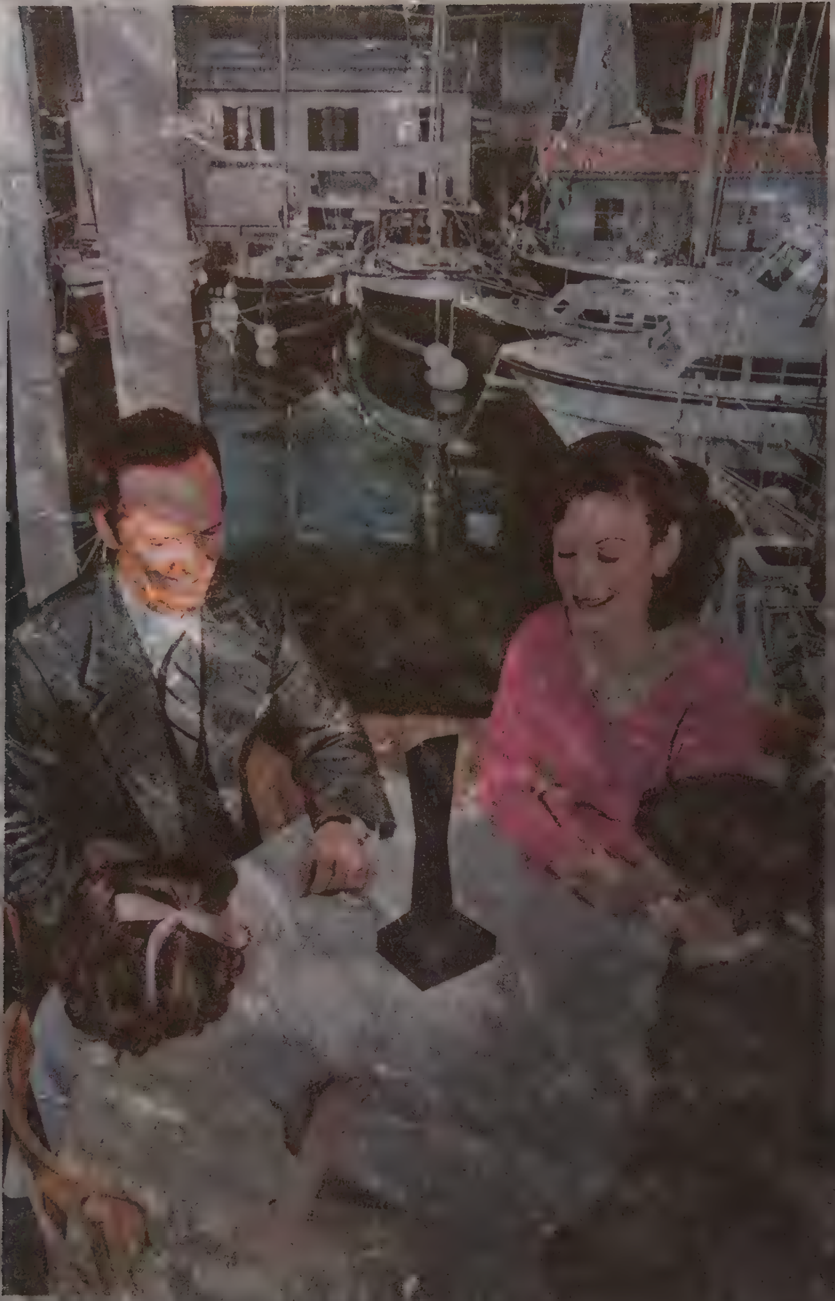
IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At the end of the song, specifically at 4:41, a faint coughing is audible. It is probably John Bonham. *Sick again?*

Plant's lines, before the singer continues with his lead vocal. The effect is peculiar and confusing, especially as the timing is complicated, with a bar in 5/4 following one in 4/4. When he plays this riff, Page doubles his Gibson with a slide part, which he positions on the left. On the first refrain, the Gibson accompaniment continues, its sound distorted and "live" (from 0:53). On the second refrain, Page plays a similar accompaniment before repeating the Who-style riff from the introduction, still on slide guitar. On this instrumental part the rhythm becomes more complicated again. Bonham's drumming is particularly dynamic here—his bass drum is in a fury—but the result is rather muddled and not really very effective (starting at 1:32). There follows an initial solo by Jimmy Page, rock tinged, very well constructed, each note exuding feeling (from 1:42).

Robert Plant resumes his lead vocal for the third verse and refrain. On the latter, a second slide guitar appears on the scene, playing descending notes at the top of the neck (from 2:46 on the right). This is followed by a second instrumental section, with rhythmic licks shared among Page, Jones, and Bonham, the latter once again furiously working his bass drum pedal and his tom-toms (from 2:55). On the last verse, Plant's voice grows noticeably hoarser: his vocal cords are probably feeling the strain at this point. Eventually, after a final refrain (from 3:55), the band embarks on a repeat of the main riff, which is played a good twenty times over! Page takes a second, very punchy solo, starting at 4:12 in the right channel and finishing on the left. Plant improvises and repeats the motif played slide on the Les Paul. The track concludes with the Les Paul, as each of the guitar tracks comes to an end.

So "Sick Again" brings *Physical Graffiti* to a highly charged finish. This track may not be one of the greatest successes on the album. Yet it reflects the vitality of the band who, now just as in their earliest days, are still able to set their amps, drums, and mics ablaze in true rock 'n' roll style.



1. ACHILLES LAST STAND **2.** FOR YOUR LIFE **3.** ROYAL ORLEANS **4.** NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE **5.** CANDY STORE ROCK **6.** HOTS ON FOR NOWHERE **7.** TEA FOR ONE **OUTTAKE :** 10 RIBS & ALL / CARROT POD POD (POD)

PRESENCE

ALBUM PRESENCE

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: April 5, 1976 (April 6 according to some sources)

United States: March 31, 1976

Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER: Swan Song SSK 59402

Number 1 (United Kingdom and United States), Number 2 (Japan), Number 4 (Australia), Number 5 (France), Number 7 (Spain)

The four members of Led Zeppelin set out to conquer the world all over again following the Rhodes automobile accident of August 4, 1975, in which Robert Plant and his wife were seriously injured.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

During their brief stay in Switzerland, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant attended the Montreux Jazz Festival (in July 1975). Onstage was John Paul Jones, accompanying the blues singer Etta James. There is a recording of the concert, *Etta James—1975: Recorded Live at Montreux Jazz Festival*, which was not released until 2015.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

After their tenth American tour, which had been a resounding triumph from the opening show in Bloomington, Minnesota, on January 18, 1975, to the closing three shows in Inglewood, California, on March 24, 25, and 27, the four members of Led Zeppelin found themselves back onstage at London's Earls Court. Three concerts had originally been planned, for May 23, 24, and 25, but due to the huge demand for tickets, the organizers added two more dates on short notice, May 17 and 18. This meant some 85,000 fans were able to go and see the British quartet live onstage. This inspired Tony Palmer to write in the *Observer*: "No pop group in history, no entertainer, no film star, no opera singer has ever attracted such an audience."[101] This meant Led Zeppelin had outdone the Rolling Stones and even the Beatles. (Admittedly that had been back in the sixties!)

These five London concerts held a special significance for both the band and their fans. Because Led Zeppelin was going into tax exile, the appearances were to be their last for a while on British soil. Denis Healey was the chancellor of the exchequer (the equivalent of the US secretary of the treasury) in the Labour government of British prime minister Harold Wilson, whose policy of economic recovery meant a dramatic increase in taxation. Onstage, Robert Plant pinned the blame for their enforced departure on one person in particular: "Somebody voted for someone and now everybody's on the run. You know Denis…no artist in the country anymore…he must be dazed and confused."[74] And then on May 25, the Led Zeppelin singer concluded the show with the words: "This is our last concert in England for some considerable time."[74]

Accident on Rhodes

Like the Rolling Stones before them, Led Zeppelin was thus taking the road into exile. Peter Grant had already been in Montreux, Switzerland, for some time, and was now presiding over the future of his charges from the home of concert promoter Claude Nobs. Robert Plant and his wife Maureen took a plane to Morocco on May 26, immediately after the Earls Court shows. Jimmy Page was to join them there a few weeks later. The plan had been for the four musicians to meet up with Peter Grant in Paris in mid-August ready for the next American tour, which was due to kick off on the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of the month with two shows in Oakland, California. So the time had not yet come for their return to the Californian sunshine. In the second half of July, after attending a number of concerts at the Montreux Jazz Festival, Robert Plant, his

Fans brave the cold for hours on end in order to secure a ticket to heaven (March 1975).

wife, their two children Carmen and Karac, and Maureen's sister Shirley Wilson went on holiday to Rhodes with Jimmy Page, Charlotte Martin, and their daughter Scarlet. Phil May of the Pretty Things was already there. Page only stayed for a few days, leaving on August 3 for Sicily to visit a farm that had belonged to Aleister Crowley—possibly with the intention of buying it.

The accident happened the following day. Maureen was at the wheel of an Austin Mini sedan that she had rented. Robert Plant was by her side, with Carmen, Karac, and Scarlet in the back seat. Maureen suddenly lost control of the vehicle on a narrow road. Avoiding the precipice by a hairsbreadth, the Austin Mini slammed into a tree. Maureen lost consciousness, Robert was injured, and the children were crying. Several hours passed before a farmer happened by and took the couple and the three children to the hospital in his small pickup. While Carmen, Karac, and Scarlet, although traumatized, escaped the accident unscathed, the same could not be said for Maureen and Robert Plant. She suffered a fractured skull and broken pelvis, while he sustained multiple fractures to his right leg and elbow. Perhaps the most worrying aspect was Maureen's urgent need for a blood transfusion, as the Mediterranean island lacked any stock of her blood type (which happened to be incompatible with her sister's!).

After receiving a telephone call from a highly distraught Charlotte Martin, Richard Cole, in London, immediately took control of the situation. He got hold of the blood plasma Maureen needed, chartered a plane from McAlpine Aviation, and took off for Rhodes in the company of two specialists: Dr. John Baretta, a physician affiliated with the Greek embassy (and therefore able to speak the language), and Dr. Mike Lawrence, an orthopedic surgeon. After overcoming the reluctance of the Rhodes authorities to release the couple (they suspected that Maureen might have been driving while under the influence of alcohol), and at the risk of delivering the Led Zeppelin singer into the clutches of the British tax authorities, Cole succeeded in taking the two casualties back to England, specifically to Guy's Hospital in the London borough of Southwark. One of the physicians at the hospital was particularly pessimistic about the singer's prospects: "You probably won't walk again for six months, maybe more. […] And there's no guarantee that you'll ever recover

The quartet in concert at Earl's Court Arena, London, in May 1975.

completely."[11] It looked as if this might be the end for Led Zeppelin. Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, and Peter Grant had good reason to be worried.

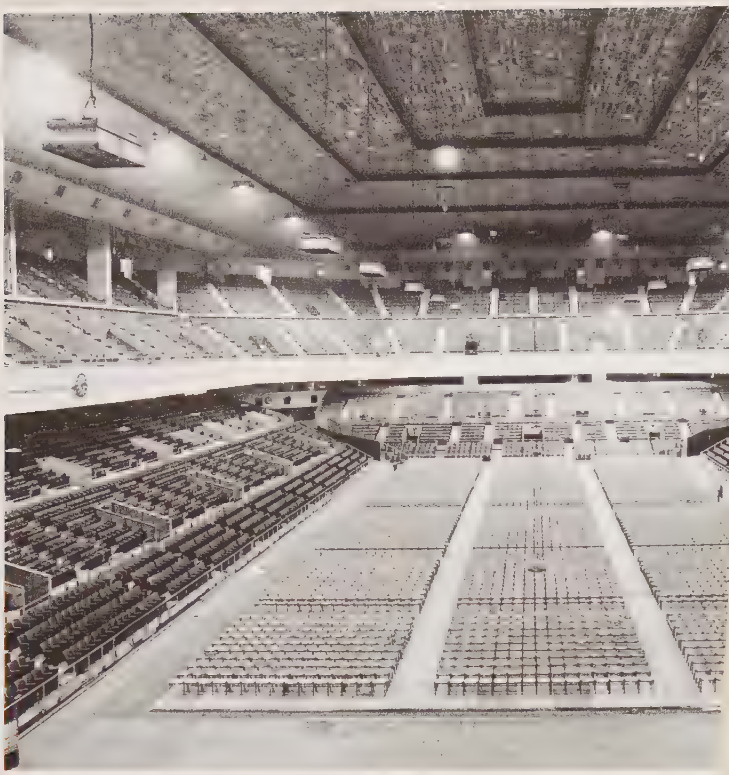
The Beginning of the End

In truth, the band had suffered one tribulation after another since the beginning of 1975. The year had begun with Jimmy Page seriously injuring his left hand while alighting from a train at Victoria station in London. This was a major handicap for the musician, forcing him to adjust his guitar technique and even avoid playing certain numbers, such as "Dazed and Confused." He also developed an increasingly inconvenient fear of flying and picked up new phobias such as claustrophobia. On top of all this he acquired a taste for heroin…Then Robert Plant caught a serious case of the flu, forcing the cancellation of a number of shows. The singer also felt the atmosphere within the band was deteriorating. The media would speak of Plant's growing distrust of Page and the guitarist's penchant for esotericism. Although they were wrong on this score, there certainly was a degree of unrest within the quartet. John Paul Jones was becoming more and more elusive and was inclined to disappear without warning. And John Bonham, who in June would become a father for the second time (to little Zoe), could no longer bear to be separated from his family. There were serious consequences when he was: as soon as he dived into the bottle, alcohol being a daily addiction, he would transform into "the Beast," feared by everyone for his outbursts of occasionally extreme violence.

The musicians' tax exile clearly did nothing to improve this negative atmosphere; in fact, it intensified their feeling of isolation, of a lack of stability. And of course Robert Plant's accident only exacerbated the profound sense of imminent catastrophe they all felt. Richard Cole sums it up perfectly: "The year they went into tax exile seemed to me like the beginning of the end."[3] Sadly, events would prove him right…

The Album: Unadulterated Anxiety and Pure Emotion

Fortunately, music was quick to reclaim its central role. Convalescing in the home of attorney Dick Christian on the island of Jersey while his wife was still being cared for in London, Robert Plant was not remotely thinking of



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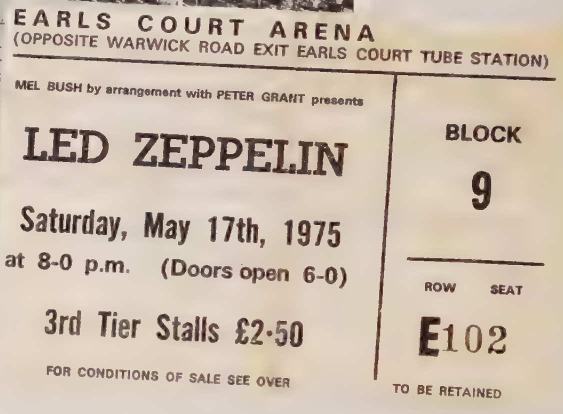

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ending his career. On the contrary, getting involved in new projects seemed to him the best possible therapy. The American tour planned for the end of August and the beginning of September would no longer be going ahead, meaning that serious inflows of cash would be forfeited. The only credible solution was to record a new album, a course of action that recommended itself all the more strongly as Jimmy Page was teeming with ideas. Similarly, it occurred to the band that the moment had come to complete their movie *The Song Remains the Same*, which had been at a standstill since 1973.

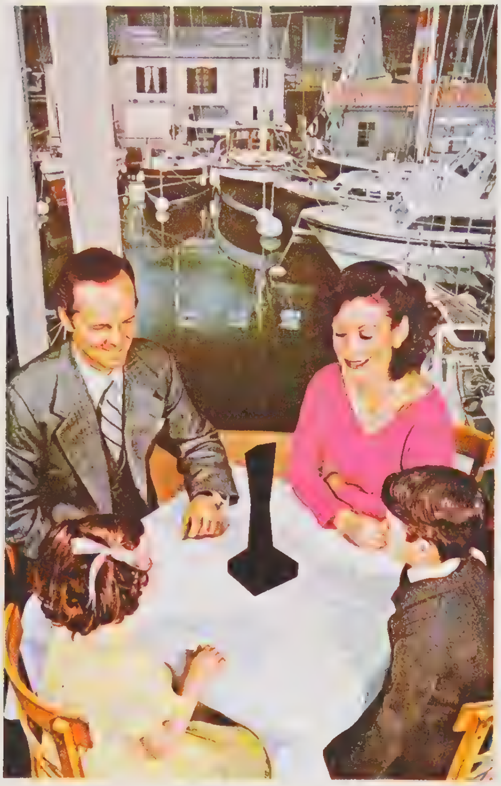
At the end of September, Robert Plant (in a wheelchair) flew out to California. Jimmy Page was already there. The guitarist had rented a villa in Malibu Colony, a delightful spot on the Pacific coast west of Los Angeles. This was an opportunity for him to take stock of his love life. Known or suspected affairs with the British model Krissy Wood (the wife of Ron Wood) and the American singer and model Bebe Buell (the future mother of Liv Tyler) had tainted his relationship with Charlotte Martin. However, the main objective of the trip was to write and compose in peace and quiet, away from the demands of show business—an impulse identical to that behind the songwriters' Welsh retreat a few years before. The months of August and September duly saw the genesis of a number of songs for the next album. In the meantime, John Paul Jones and John Bonham had joined Jimmy Page and Robert Plant under the radiant southern Californian skies.

The album was named *Presence*. "It was an album of circumstances," Plant told *Circus* at the time. "It was a cry from the depths, the only thing that we could do."[102] A cry, that is, involving practically no acoustic instrument of any kind. The guitars wail, the rhythm section is explosive, and the vocals are wrathful. At a time when glam rock was at its height and punk rock was starting to beat on the doors of the clubs and record companies, the four members of Led Zeppelin were reminding their fans that they were the progenitors of hard rock. In the *Rolling Stone* of May 20, 1976, Stephen Davis wrote: "Led Zeppelin's seventh album confirms this quartet's status as heavy-metal champions of the known universe. *Presence* takes up where last season's monumentally molten *Physical Graffiti* left off—few melodies, a preoccupation with hard-rock rhythm, lengthy echoing moans gushing from Robert Plant and a general lyrical slant toward the cosmos. (Give an Englishman 50,000 watts, a chartered jet, a little cocaine and some groupies and he thinks he's a god. [...])"[103]

Led Zeppelin's London celebration: five packed houses at Earl's Court Arena.

In reality, as with their previous albums, especially *IV* and *Physical Graffiti*, Led Zeppelin was to venture way beyond heavy rock. "Achilles Last Stand," perhaps the last great classic track by the British quartet, deserves to be ranked among the major achievements of progressive rock, not far behind "Kashmir," while "Nobody's Fault but Mine" is one of the most incandescent and electric takes on the blues, and features a dazzling vocal performance from Plant. "Tea for One" is another excellent track, in the same vein (if not quite as inspired) as "Since I've Been Loving You." On the other hand, the remaining four songs are perhaps not quite on the same musical level. "For Your Life," "Royal Orleans," "Candy Store Rock," and "Hots On for Nowhere" are notable more for Page's guitar pyrotechnics—riffs that have the effect of "a swift kick to the solar plexus"[9]—than for any real investment on the part of the four musicians. All in all, *Presence* is a somber LP due to the homesickness felt by all four of the band members and to Plant's accident, but above all because it was no longer possible to take the future for granted. A somber LP punctuated by wild and irresistible guitar playing, and an LP of which Jimmy Page was the one and only musical architect.

By the time it went on sale (March 31, 1976, in the United States and April 5 in the United Kingdom), *Presence* had already gone Gold in Britain thanks to all the advance orders, but it was also the first disc in the world to go straight to Platinum! Another first for the British was that the album rose to number 1 on the charts more quickly than any other in Atlantic Records' prestigious history. In the United States the album's success was equally dazzling: on the Billboard chart it rose from number 24 to number 1 in less than two weeks! This success was replicated at a slightly lower, though still impressive, level in various other countries. The LP got to number 2 in Japan, number 4 in Australia and Norway, number 5 in France, and number 7 in Spain (albeit only to number 27 in West Germany). This enthusiasm was not unanimously shared by the critics, even in the United Kingdom. While Chris Welch wrote in the *Melody Maker*: "Well, Led Zeppelin have come among us again, this time with a whole album of dynamic compositions delivered with a fervour that shows how anxious they were to get down their new ideas. An album that has pace, direction and tremendous style,"[104] Charles Shaar Murray, writing in the *NME*, was far less convinced: "No mellotrons, no acoustic guitars. [...] no-hats-off-to-Harper, no funk or reggae



The sleeve of the album *Presence*: a middle-class family contemplates a strange black object.

piss-takes. [...] Now the bad news. [...] There ain't one single candidate for the Led Zeppelin All-Time Killer Hall Of Fame in the whole caboodle."[105]

In spite of the fans' initial excitement and the playing to death of "Achilles Last Stand" on air, it was not long before the album plunged back down the charts. Ultimately, sales would be the lowest of any of the band's LPs. Furthermore, this would be the first time a Led Zeppelin disc was to be found on special offer in the record stores. Jimmy Page nevertheless defended the album: "I think that *Presence* was a highly underrated record. *Presence* was pure anxiety and emotion. I mean, we didn't know if we'd ever be able to play in the same way again. It might have been a very dramatic change, if the worst had happened to Robert. *Presence* is our best in terms of uninterrupted emotion."[21]

The Sleeve

The title of Led Zeppelin's seventh album was chosen by the members of the group and Peter Grant to suit the visuals rather than the other way around. As with *Houses of the Holy*, the artwork was commissioned from the Hipgnosis design studio. Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell, assisted by Peter Christopherson (the future founder of the music group and artistic concept Throbbing Gristle) and George Hardie (to whom Led Zeppelin owed the sleeve design for their first album), were partly inspired by the sleeve of *Wish You Were Here* (1975), designed by Hipgnosis the year before. Instead of two men (one of them on fire) shaking hands under mysterious circumstances, as on the Pink Floyd cover, they went for a typical postwar middle-class family scene: father, mother, and two children. This family is seated at a restaurant table. In the background behind them is a marina. So far, so unspectacular. The shot of the family was taken at a studio on Bow Street in London, while the marina is an image from the Earls Court Boat Show (winter 1974–75). Storm Thorgerson explains that he had to do a certain amount of retouching of this first photograph: "I soft bleached the dark areas to lighten the table cloth and then with the Sable brush carefully drew back the subtle pattern. The Dad had quite a receding hairline so added some hair and reduced some highlights on his suit jacket."[106]

The monolith in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. A point of reference for the graphic designers at Hipgnosis.

To coincide with the release of *Presence*, Swan Song had planned to distribute to journalists replicas of the black obelisk along with reproductions of famous buildings (the White House and 10 Downing Street). The idea was shelved when *Sounds* leaked the publicity stunt to the public. Only the models of the Object were distributed in the end.

The most intriguing aspect, it has to be said, is not the atmosphere of this photographic montage, which evokes a bygone age, but the black object in the middle of the table, which is being stared at by the four members of the respectable-looking family: an obelisk some 12 inches (30 centimeters) high made by George Hardie and Crispin Mellor. What is the significance of this object? Storm Thorgerson sheds some light on the matter: "What we came up with was the idea of placing an item from one time or another into a surrounding from another time. So we chose all those pictures from the forties and fifties and contaminated them with the presence of the black obsessional object. The black object stands as being as powerful as one's imagination cares it to be, and we felt Zeppelin could rightfully feel the same way about themselves in the world of rock music. So, in those scenes, The Object, as we dubbed it, was essential to all parts of the society. And those people in the scenes were trying to discover what The Object was—and how its presence is felt. I think the whole sleeve concept was very appropriate for Zeppelin. The band are a very powerful band, musically and socially, and the black object is a definite thing of power."[74]

The object in question also calls to mind the monolith in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which is transparent in Arthur C. Clarke's novel and black in Stanley Kubrick's movie. Robert Plant makes the same connection: "I'm glad people are wondering what it means. The most I can say though is that everybody should work it out for themselves—it's not hard to work out, specially for our Kubrickian fans."[74] The presence of this black object on the tablecloth is thus a symbol of knowledge. This hypothesis is confirmed by the photograph on the back of the sleeve, depicting a classroom with a schoolmistress and two young pupils (a boy and a girl, the latter none other than Samantha Gates, who had previously been photographed for the cover of *Houses of the Holy*), and, on the table, the black obelisk…Printed on the inner sleeve are eight photographs in the same post–Second World War spirit, featuring in each case the black "object." It is interesting to note that the various photographic documents evoke the magazines *Life* and *Look*, which, from the thirties onward, revolutionized journalism by placing photographic reportage center stage. George Hardie and the entire Hipgnosis team were nominated in the Best Album Package category at the 1977 Grammy Awards…but failed to win.

The Recording

The story of *Presence* opens in October 1975 with Jimmy Page and Robert Plant playing their new

Presence marks the end of the collaboration between Keith Harwood and Led Zeppelin. On September 3, 1977, the sound engineer was killed when his car crashed into a tree on Queens Ride in the London suburb of Barnes. In a tragic coincidence, Marc Bolan (of T. Rex) would die in the same circumstances and at the same spot two weeks later (September 16). Keith Harwood had just finished mixing the double album *Love You Live* (1977), which the Rolling Stones dedicated to his memory.

PAUL MCCARTNEY: BONHAM STIFFENS THE WINGS

August 28, 1975, saw John Bonham in the studio with Paul McCartney, who had invited him along to record a track for his new album *Wings at the Speed of Sound*. The track on which Bonham drums, absolutely brilliantly, is "Beware My Love." The take did not make its way onto the original album release, but would be included as a bonus track on the deluxe edition of the CD (2014). McCartney, a great admirer of Bonzo, would later say of the Led Zeppelin member: "He was always on my top 5 drummer list and a great friend and ballsy drummer!"[107]

compositions, some of which had reached a reasonably advanced state while others remained no more than sketches, to John Paul Jones and John Bonham. The rehearsals were held at Studio Instrument Rentals (SIR) in Los Angeles (6465 West Sunset Boulevard). The four members of Led Zeppelin got down to the nitty-gritty of recording the following month, not in California but in West Germany. The reason for this was to avoid another set of tax authorities: those of the United States. The chosen venue was Musicland Studios in Munich (Arabellastrasse 5). Located in the basement of the Arabella Bogenhausen Hotel, where the four musicians were staying, the studios had been founded by the Italian producer Giorgio Moroder at the end of the sixties. A few months earlier, Donna Summer had recorded *Love to Love You Baby* (1975) there, and the following year Thin Lizzy would use the studios to record the overdubs for *Johnny the Fox* (1976). Meanwhile the Rolling Stones, who in 1973 had recorded a large part of *It's Only Rock 'n Roll* there, were getting ready to resume sessions (which had started at the end of 1974) for *Black and Blue*. Accompanying the four members of Led Zeppelin was sound engineer Keith Harwood, who, having worked on the band's last two albums, would stay on at Musicland to work with the Stones on *Black and Blue* in December. Jeremy Gee, who went on to work with the Stones, Deep Purple, Thin Lizzy, and others, assisted Harwood.

Because of the imminent arrival of the Stones, Led Zeppelin had a window of just over two weeks at the studios. It was therefore during the second half of November (between November 21 and December 2, 1975 according to some sources) that Led Zeppelin laid down the seven songs on *Presence* plus the outtake "10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)." This fast pace of work, achieved in spite of Plant's handicap, explains the spontaneity of the album as a whole.

In order to make *Presence* (produced, like Led Zeppelin's previous albums, by Jimmy Page), the band members had to change the way they worked. They could no longer take their time and stagger the sessions in order to record an indefinite number of takes as they had with the last four discs. Here in Munich there was no Rolling Stones Mobile Studio or Ronnie Lane Mobile waiting patiently outside. There were no days booked for overdubbing or mixing in different studios so that they could vary the sound and atmosphere. Everything would be done as a matter of urgency and in this one venue. When Page was asked to describe the frame of mind of the band during these sessions, he would reply without hesitation: "Fighting the deadline."[4] Similarly, there were no special acoustics and no entrance hall with magic reverb as at Headley Grange. All there was to satisfy the expectations of Jimmy Page, a producer with a sensitive, demanding, and imaginative ear, were the four walls of a superb studio at the cutting edge of technology.

Thrown back on themselves, and fired by the anger that comes from feeling they were defying the course of events, the four members of Led Zeppelin had to battle hard to get their seventh album made, such were the testing conditions and difficult psychological state in which they were working. It is an album on which the band members would bare their souls: "It was a reflection of the height of our emotions of the time," the guitarist would explain. "There are no acoustic songs, no keyboards, no mellowness [...]. We did the whole thing

Mick Jagger (with Billy Preston next to him) in 1975. The Munich sessions for *Black and Blue* were soon to begin.

in 18 days. I was working an average of 18 to 20 hours a day."[4] The advantage of this enormous pressure is that it acted as a motor, providing an additional stimulus. Fully aware of this dynamic, Page held back on trying to get extra time out of Atlantic: "I did not want the record to drag on. Under the circumstances I felt that if it had dragged on, a negative, destructive element might have entered the picture. The urgency helped us to create an interesting album."[4] An additional difficulty for Jimmy Page was that he was the only one contributing ideas: "It was really up to me to come up with all the riffs, which is probably why *Presence* is so guitar-heavy."[4] While his bandmates were demoralized by their tax exile and the multiple trials they had undergone over the past few months, Page suffered especially from the desertion of John Paul Jones, who limited his contribution to his bass lines.

After laying down all the tracks with the band, Page needed some additional time in which to complete the overdubs and mixing, and got in touch with Mick Jagger: "Can I have two days to finish what we're doing?" asked Page. "Fine,"[16] came the reply from the Stones singer. Other than Robert Plant, the guitarist's bandmates did not really understand where he was going with the album, what else it was he wanted to achieve. But they left him alone, with Keith Harwood at the console, and Page achieved the incredible feat of recording all the overdubs for the album in a single night, and in barely two sequences! "I wanted to give each section its own identity," he explains, and I think it came off really good. I didn't think I'd be able to do it in one night; I thought I'd have to do it in the course of three different nights to get the individual sections. But I was so into it that my mind was working properly for a change."[18] The guitarist pulled off a real tour de force. To record the overdubs for seven tracks is no easy task, but after more than two weeks of intensive work, his achievement was immense. What's more, he was happy with the results and felt he had grown in maturity.

This was not quite the end of the road, however, as the mixing was still to be done: "After we finished recording all of our parts, the engineer, Keith Harwood, and me just started mixing until we would fall asleep. Then whoever would wake up first would call the other and we'd continue to work until we passed out again."[9] With the album finally complete, Page lost no time in going to see Mick Jagger, who was staying in the same hotel, with a copy of the mix, and played a few of the tracks to him.

"He says, 'Is that what you managed to do over the three weeks?' I said, 'No, we've got a whole album.' He said, 'You mean the basic tracks?' I said, 'No, we're done, finished. Thanks for the two days."[16]

Although completed not long after Thanksgiving (which explains why Robert Plant would suggest, in vain, that it be called *Thanksgiving*), the album would not be released until March of the following year due to the time needed to complete the sleeve visuals.

It is Robert Plant who best sums up the struggle the four members of Led Zeppelin endured to get their seventh opus recorded: "*Presence* was our stand against everything. Our stand against the Elements, against Chance. We were literally fighting against Existence itself. We'd left home for twelve months and it seemed that everything was about to crumble."[21]

Presence would turn out to be one of Jimmy Page's favorite albums, precisely because of this challenge the band had taken up with heart and soul.

Technical Details

Under the stewardship of producer and sound engineer Reinhold Mack, Musicland Studios in Munich would see a host of pop and rock stars pass through its doors, including (in addition to Donna Summer and Thin Lizzy, mentioned above) Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Queen, ELO, and Marc Bolan of T. Rex. The studio equipment included a Harrison 3232 console, Westlake monitors, and most probably a twenty-four-track 3M M79 tape machine, as sixteen- to twenty-four-track multitracks had become the norm by this time.

The Instruments

Presence saw the band going back to basics, and as a result the range of instruments used on this recording was substantially reduced.

Jimmy Page would play two main guitars on the album: his Gibson Les Paul Standard "Number One" and a new Fender Stratocaster, a 1964 Lake Placid Blue model. This was reportedly shown to him as he was starting work on the soundtrack of the movie *The Song Remains the Same* at Electric Lady Studios in New York with Eddie Kramer and Robert Plant.

He may also have used other guitars: the Fender Electric XII (not confirmed) on "Achilles Last Stand" and "For Your Life" and a 1953 Fender Telecaster "Botswana Brown" (which he may have bought when the band was rehearsing at SIR in Los Angeles in October) on the outtake "10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)." Another instrument that can be heard on this one and only outtake from the sessions is a Martin D-28 acoustic that he also plays on "Candy Store Rock."

Paul McCartney's Rockestra (with Pete Townshend of the Who) at the Concert for the People of Kampuchea in December 1979. John Paul Jones and John Bonham were also in the band.

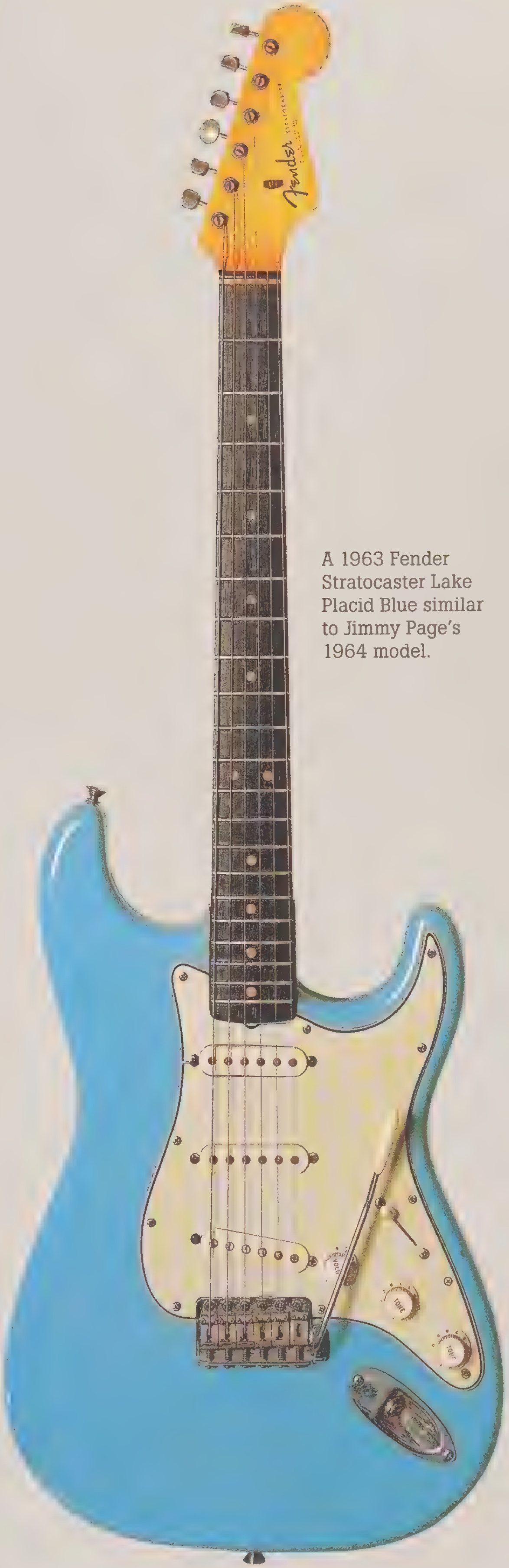
PAUL MCCARTNEY: GOT TO GET YOU INTO MY LIFE

The former Beatles bassist would never stop admiring Led Zeppelin. After playing with Bonzo in 1975, he referenced Jimmy Page in the lyrics to "Rock Show," from *Venus and Mars* (1975). In 1978 he invited Bonham for a second time, this time to play on "Rockestra Theme" and "So Glad to See You Here" (*Back to the Egg*, 1979) with John Paul Jones on bass and piano. Robert Plant would in turn sing with the Rockestra, a supergroup formed by McCartney in 1979, based on the song of the same name, in a fund-raising concert for the victims of the war in Cambodia (*Concerts for the People of Kampuchea*, 1981).

A newly acquired effect is his MXR Phase 90 pedal, although he almost certainly continues to use his Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser as well. Finally, by way of amplification, he plugs into the same configuration of Marshall 1959SLP and Marshall 1982A baffles as before, but also seems to use a Fender (Twin Reverb?) amp belonging to Musicland Studios as well as his Vox AC30/6 (on "Hots On for Nowhere").

John Paul Jones remains faithful to his 1962 Fender Jazz Bass but also turns to a second eight-string bass. After the 1968 Hagstrom H8 that can be heard on "Celebration Day" (*Led Zeppelin III*), he now plays a superb BecVar Series I Triple Omega bass that he bought in San Francisco before the start of the Presence sessions. On the outtake "10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)" Jones plays a Steinway concert grand, the only keyboard used on the Munich sessions.

As for John Bonham, there is no photograph or reliable eyewitness account that allows his drum kit to be clearly identified. Some sources claim he uses a new Ludwig "Silver Sparkle," while other accounts maintain there was a drum kit already present at Musicland Studios. It also seems probable, however, that Bonham is once again using his trusty "Green Sparkle." The only given is that it is a Ludwig kit he is playing.



A 1963 Fender Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue similar to Jimmy Page's 1964 model.

August 1979: Led Zeppelin at Knebworth, where "Achilles Last Stand" was on the set list.

ACHILLES LAST STAND

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 10:26

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recording and Mixing
Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany: November 1975
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

A monument to the glory of the guitar, the small-scale symphony that opens *Presence* is, like "Kashmir" before it, an invigorating cocktail of Western and oriental colors. The birth of the song and its sophisticated construction date back to the Malibu sojourn of Page and Plant. The lyrics, again like those of "Kashmir," are some of the most beautiful and allusive ever written by Robert Plant. They are the fruit of the trip to Morocco undertaken by the singer and the guitarist (with their loved ones) in July 1975 following the concerts at Earls Court in London, but also of the serious automobile accident that occurred on the island of Rhodes on August 4, almost costing the lives of Robert Plant and his wife Maureen.

With some logic, the lyricist, confined to his wheelchair, identifies with Achilles, the legendary hero of the Trojan War. Son of Peleus, king of the Myrmidons, and the beautiful sea nymph Thetis, the infant Achilles was immersed in the Styx (one of the rivers of the underworld) by his mother, who wanted to make him invulnerable, and almost succeeded. His entire body was protected except his heel, by which Thetis held on to him tightly. Inevitably, this heel was to be the brave warrior's undoing: it was there that he was struck by the fatal arrow shot from Paris's bow and guided by Apollo.

"Achilles Last Stand" is therefore both the story of an actual journey and a journey into mythology. *It was an April morning when they told us we should go*...begins the epic that takes the hero *to sandy lands and other days* that will allow him to *touch the dream*, and that will bring him into contact with the Giant (Homer's Cyclops or Eurymedon?) and Atlas, the Titan who holds *the heavens from the earth* with his *mighty arms*. It is also an epic penned by Robert Plant under the influence of his reading: *Oh, Albion remains/Sleeping now to rise again refers to* William Blake's famous engraving *The Dance of Albion* (circa 1795) that symbolizes not just England, but liberty elevated to the supreme value of British

politics. Here we return to mythology as Albion is not merely the patron deity of Britain but a giant too, the son of Poseidon and the brother of…Atlas. Also known by the title *Glad Day*, *The Dance of Albion* was accompanied by the following couplet: "Albion rose from where he labour'd at the Mill with Slaves / Giving himself for the Nations he danc'd the dance of Eternal Death." Clearly the lyricist had thoroughly assimilated these lines by the time he came to write his heroic tale…

During the 1977 tour, "Achilles Last Stand" was added to the list of favorites performed live. The four members of Led Zeppelin also played the song during their set at the Knebworth Festival in August 1979, and again in 1980. Highly symbolically, the band also performed "Achilles Last Stand" at their very last concert, given at the Eissporthalle in Berlin on July 7, 1980.

Production

Listening to "Achilles Last Stand," how can we sum up the achievement of the individual band members? Each of the four contributes a remarkable performance. An urgency and a palpable emotion can be felt in their playing. The track is clearly dominated by Jimmy Page with the uninterrupted presence of his guitar parts, each more dazzling than the last. But his bandmates are far from unworthy. Like four musketeers, they demonstrate that the key to the Led Zeppelin magic lies in the pooling of their various talents.

The opening track on *Presence* provides us with a good opportunity to assess the band's new sound. It goes without saying that Musicland Studios possessed very different acoustics than England's manor houses. As in any professional studio, the sound quality in Munich was completely controlled, something Jimmy Page had basically tried to avoid up to this point. The results the band obtained, however, are more than respectable and by no means disgrace their previous albums. *Presence* is simply a little less dark, less live, less magnetic. And with Keith Harwood at the controls, the four members of Led Zeppelin did at least retain a link with their past.

The track opens with a reasonably extended guitar fade-in. Jimmy Page plays an arpeggiated part on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One," which he then doubles and positions in stereo. The sound is distorted (presumably through his Marshall). John Bonham enters timidly with a few strokes on the bell of a cymbal before properly launching his rhythm part with a summons on the snare drum. At the same time, the principal riff of

With "Achilles Last Stand," Jimmy Page once again proved himself to be an outstanding composer and a brilliant guitarist.

"Achilles Last Stand" rings out on Page's two Les Pauls. His sinewy playing serves this incredible motif, one of evident evocative power, wonderfully well. The guitarist takes us on a tumultuous, epic, dangerous journey, yet one infused with hope, the consequence of the painful experiences undergone by the band during the months before they entered the studio. Page is supported by an incredible drum part from John Bonham, recorded most probably on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle," although a "Silver Sparkle" has often been suggested. For Bonham, this track provides an opportunity to give another demonstration of his exceptional qualities as a drummer. But words count for little. To properly appreciate his playing we need to listen to the way he grooves, to the way he supports Page's riffs on his snare drum, to the way he strings together technically complex fills with disarming ease. "John Bonham was a great musician,"[36] John Paul Jones has said. For his part, Jones delivers a remarkable bass line of extraordinary rhythmic power. Using a pick, he creates a highly distinctive sound quite different from the one he normally produces on his Fender Jazz Bass. When Jimmy Page presented the material to him and asked him for his opinion on how to flesh out the riff, he replied without hesitation: "8-string bass!"[108] The instrument in question is a BecVar Series I Triple Omega bass purchased in San Francisco a few months before the Munich sessions. It had been made by one Bruce BecVar, a luthier who worked for the bass manufacturer Alembic but had created his own model. Jones fell in love with the instrument and has compared its sound to that of a big harpsichord. And this is exactly the impression one gets when listening to his bass line. The sound is enormous and the strings slap out the rhythm not unlike the Rickenbacker 4001 of Yes bassist Chris Squire. "I played a sparse bass riff on 'Achilles Last Stand,' which allowed him [Bonzo] to work quite quickly,"[36] says Jones. The collusion of Jones and Bonham generates a locomotive-like rhythm and an adrenaline rush over which Jimmy Page is able to unfold his astonishing guitar parts.

Despite his plaster cast and wheelchair, Robert Plant also delivers an excellent performance, his voice filled with emotion and his timbre equal to the task despite his handicap. Moreover, the session almost took a tragic turn for the singer. Seized by a sudden desire to listen to a particular passage of the song, he dashed toward the recording booth, inadvertently stepping on his injured foot: "There was an almighty crack and a great flash of light and pain and I folded up in agony,"[10] he recalls. Page rushed up to help and Plant was immediately taken to the hospital. He had narrowly avoided permanently disabling himself, but thankfully his leg was saved. In spite of the drama, he remained in complete control of his voice and harmonizes with himself on the second half of each verse (for example at 1:03 and 1:09).

A Whirlwind of Emotion

At 1:52, Jimmy Page plays a new riff that was to influence a number of progressive metal groups, and musician Steven Wilson in particular. This is followed by an ascending scale harmonized on two guitars, the first strongly colored by phasing (deriving presumably from his new MXR Phase 90 effects pedal) and positioned on the left. The guitarist recalls John Paul Jones's reaction when he explained his idea to the bassist: "He said I couldn't do a scale over a certain section, that it just wouldn't work. But it did."[37]

At the end of the third verse, Page resumes the main riff with the unstinting rhythmic support of Bonham and Jones (from 2:52). He adds a counterpoint in the form of two more guitar overdubs, again harmonized and colored by phasing. Another verse follows, and then a reprise of the second riff, with Plant audible in the background, drenched in reverb (at 3:30). Jimmy Page then launches into a memorable guitar solo on his Les Paul (from 3:43), a solo he rates as one of his best: "I guess the solo in 'Achilles Last Stand' on *Presence* is in the same tradition as the solo from 'Stairway to Heaven' on the fourth LP. It is on that level to me."[18] The guitarist is indeed brilliant, the emotion oozing through his

John Paul Jones and his magnificent eight-string bass, the famous BecVar Series I Triple Omega (being played here onstage in Rotterdam in June 1980).

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Achilles Last Stand" was recorded under the working title "Two Ones Are Won." It was also, for obvious reasons, nicknamed the "Wheelchair Song."

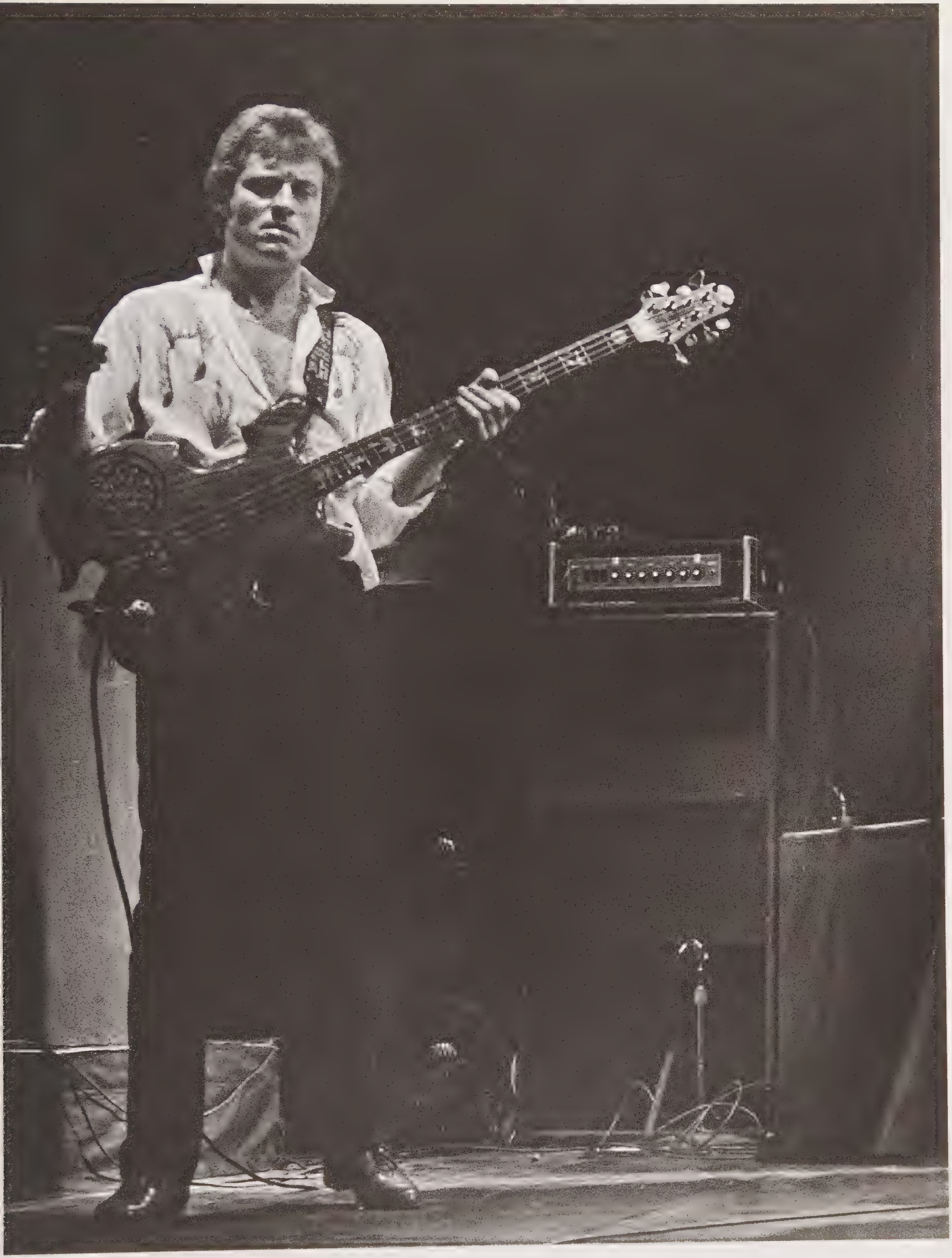
fingertips. He is aiming not for technique or speed but for feeling. His runs are lyrical but unmistakably rock at all times. With the support of the rhythm section, his solo moves into something akin to progressive jazz-rock territory, all the more so as Bonham punctuates the musical texture with numerous breaks on his snare drum in the style of a military march or the start of a bolero, the Spanish flavor of which is accentuated by some of the guitarist's licks (for example at 4:15). Carried by generous reverb and a reasonably discreet delay, Page's notes hang in the air before being interrupted by a recapitulation of the ascending harmonic progression (at 5:03).

In the next two verses, Page plays phrases that he harmonizes on two guitars (with phasing) underneath Plant's voice, while Plant himself launches into an ascending melodic line enveloped in reverb. He clings to Jones's bass line (from 6:22), and then overdubs a second vocal line, now without reverb (from 6:36). This is highly effective, and Plant's performance is superb. This passage is followed by another bolero sequence and then a return of the ascending harmonic progression. Over this can be heard a high-pitched sound resembling that of a synthesizer (from 6:56). Some commentators would later identify it as an EMS VCS3, but as Page has frequently insisted that no synthesizer was used in the making of the album, the explanation is probably more straightforward. When asked in an interview in 1993 if he had speeded up the tapes of *Houses of the Holy*, the guitarist would reply candidly: "No, the only song I can think of that we vari-speeded up were a couple of overdubs on 'Achilles Last Stand.'"[4] The shrill sound that can be heard at this point therefore most probably results from a guitar recorded at a slower speed and then replayed normally.

Robert Plant resumes his ascending melodic line (from 7:02), tracking Jones's bass and harmonized once again by Page on two guitars, this time played slide. The guitarist continues in the same vein over the reprise of the main riff, and Bonham executes an absolutely staggering drum fill in a sudden burst of adrenaline (at 7:27). Plant then launches into a new sequence (from 7:29) with *ah ah ahs* repeated no less than twenty times in succession! A new ascending line from the singer is joined by guitars (from 8:14) that follow the same rising harmonic progression, and a final bolero sequence then occurs with a number of slide solos executed on the Les Paul, the different tracks answering each other from either side of the stereo field (from 8:28). This is followed by the return of the riff and the final verse sung by Plant, whose voice pans around the stereo field (from 9:00) with vocal effects drenched in reverb, and the reprise of a series of sixteen *ah ah ahs*. Finally the track ends with Page's two arpeggiated guitar parts exactly as in the intro, but with far stronger phasing (from 9:46). It seems very likely that one of the two guitars (perhaps both?) is an electric twelve-string.

A Led Zep Classic

"Achilles Last Stand" is a monument to Jimmy Page and his guitars. It is almost impossible to determine the number of different guitar parts he recorded, and the guitarist himself no longer knows how many different tracks the song has. It is also difficult to say for sure whether or not he used a twelve-string, the sound of the instrument in question being particularly hard to identify. What is clear, listening to this masterpiece, is that Page kept faith with his idea of an orchestra of guitars, which had made its appearance on "Stairway to Heaven" and continued through tracks such as "The Song Remains the Same" and "Kashmir." Given its length, "Achilles Last Stand" had to succeed in maintaining the listener's interest at a constant high level, by no means an easy thing to achieve in practice: "I knew it had to be jolly good, because the number was so long it just couldn't afford to be half-baked. It was all down to me how to do this. I had a lot of it mapped out in my mind, anyway, but to make a long story short, I did all the overdubs in one night."[37] And this was Page's great strength, the ability to complete all the guitar parts so quickly, having already spent several weeks in the studio. "Achilles Last Stand" is a real achievement, one of Led Zeppelin's last great classics.



FOR YOUR LIFE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:21

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, tambourine
Recording and Mixing
Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany: November 1975
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At 5:31, Robert Plant can be heard grunting—the singer's way of confronting cocaine snorters with the less than flattering reality of their habit.

Genesis

The music for "For Your Life" was created and then recorded at Musicland Studios. The lyrics seem to have been written in Malibu and completed during the sessions in Munich. In any case, they amount to a more or less faithful reflection of the singer's state of mind following his serious automobile accident on the island of Rhodes. Through his words, Plant evokes the copious amounts of cocaine consumed on the Pacific coast, particularly by musicians. His main target is Los Angeles, the *city of the damned*. The narrator (very probably Plant himself) addresses a female friend. It seems likely that he has tried the white powder and is aware of the bleak consequences. *Exhibition is your habit, emotion second hand*, the narrator tells her. And then he becomes more direct: *Down in the pits you go no longer, the next stop's underground.* In other words, death lies in wait for the hard-drug addict, and especially the rock star: *Wine and roses ain't quite over till fate deals a losing hand*. Is this a concealed warning addressed to his friend Jimmy Page? Could Page be the one who *overran it*? By no means impossible given that by this time the Led Zeppelin guitarist had been taking cocaine for a number of years (and would start using heroin during the sessions for *Presence*).

Led Zeppelin never performed "For Your Life" live with John Bonham. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones gave a rendition of it with Jason Bonham at the famous Ahmet Ertegun Tribute Concert at London's O2 Arena on December 10, 2007.

Production

It seems the highly poetic working title for this new number, which came into existence spontaneously at the Bavarian studios, was "The Piss and Ale." In terms of style, it can be described as a funky rock track of a reasonably uncluttered kind, with a sense of space and plenty of time to breathe. The rhythmic articulation has a major bearing on how the trio functions: Jimmy Page

Robert Plant shortly before his accident on Rhodes. "For Your Life" is an introspective song, a reflection on Los Angeles and rock-star excess.

John Bonham, the rhythmic intelligence behind "For Your Life."

plays a riff to which John Bonham cleaves on bass drum or snare, while John Paul Jones takes on the task of supporting his two colleagues simultaneously.

Page opens "For Your Life" with a riff more or less typical of his style, not on his Gibson Les Paul, but on his newly acquired 1964 Fender Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue. His guitar sound is hard-edged, and he blasts out his chords with heaps of rock 'n' roll attitude. An extra dimension is added with his use of the whammy bar, with which he creates a kind of dive bomb that moves around the stereo field to awesome effect (for example at 0:09). Jones makes a point of sticking closely to Page on his Fender Jazz Bass, the very present sound of which significantly boosts the guitar. He also supports the bass drum, Bonham, for his part, working in complete symbiosis with Page's Stratocaster. On the one hand Bonzo's drumming is pretty restrained here, though never lacking in groove. On the other, he imparts an incredible and powerful funk-rock swing to the music. A tambourine can also be heard in the background. In all likelihood Bonham himself plays this, and in spite of its discreet presence it's a key element in the cohesion of the trio.

Robert Plant's lead vocal is excellent in spite of his handicap, which must inevitably have hampered his performance. Certainly he is no longer roaring, as he had in the past, but his power and timbre remain unrivaled and he delivers a performance on a par with those of his bandmates. A slight delay and shortish reverb are applied to his vocal, and he finishes the end of each verse in a voice colored by phasing (for example at 1:04 and 4:12).

After a riff sequence in which Page uses his whammy bar to create a dive bomb that pans from side to side (listen at 1:13), there is another verse, which ends with a second and far funkier riff (at 2:07). He doubles his Strat (on the left) with another guitar that sounds like a twelve-string electric (on the right). This seems pretty certain from the arpeggios that follow (from 2:30). But which twelve-string? His Fender Electric XII? His Gibson EDS-1275? Or some other instrument? It's difficult to say. Robert Plant doubles himself in this section. While his synchronization is not particularly convincing, the way he draws out his voice meshes perfectly with the very regular rhythm of his colleagues (from 2:38).

Robert Plant at the Chicago Stadium on January 20, 1975. It was onstage that the full power of "For Your Life" could be felt.

In the middle of the third verse, the key suddenly rises by a tone, accentuating the track's funky beat a little more (at 3:35). This is followed by a second arpeggiated sequence after which Jimmy Page takes an excellent solo (from 4:17), presumably on his Lake Placid Blue Strat, although the sound also resembles that of a Telecaster fitted with a B-Bender. Either way, some of his phrases have a jazz-rock color, although he is adept at switching back to an incisive blues-rock style with subtle use of the whammy bar. This he employs more conspicuously in the final verses, producing a range of effects including a very fast tremolo (at 5:12) and strongly accented dive bombs (at 5:17).

The track ends with Robert Plant's voice colored by phasing (from 6:08) and a closing chord from Page modulated by means of his whammy bar and panned around the stereo field.

"For Your Life" is a number that assumes its full dimensions when performed live, as demonstrated at the 2007 O2 Arena concert in London. That said, it lacks the sheer inspiration of "Achilles Last Stand" and with it some of the magic we have come to expect from Led Zeppelin.

ROYAL ORLEANS

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 2:58

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums, congas
Recording and Mixing
Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany: November 1975
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

The third track on *Presence* takes its title from the name of the hotel in which the members of Led Zeppelin stayed when they played New Orleans. This establishment (today the Omni Royal Orleans) is located on Saint Louis Street in the heart of the French Quarter. The song tells of an amusing incident that reportedly befell John Paul Jones. The story goes that one evening in New Orleans, after trawling the bars in the French Quarter, Jones made the acquaintance of a group of charming and attractive young ladies and took one of them back to his hotel room before realizing that she was actually a transvestite.

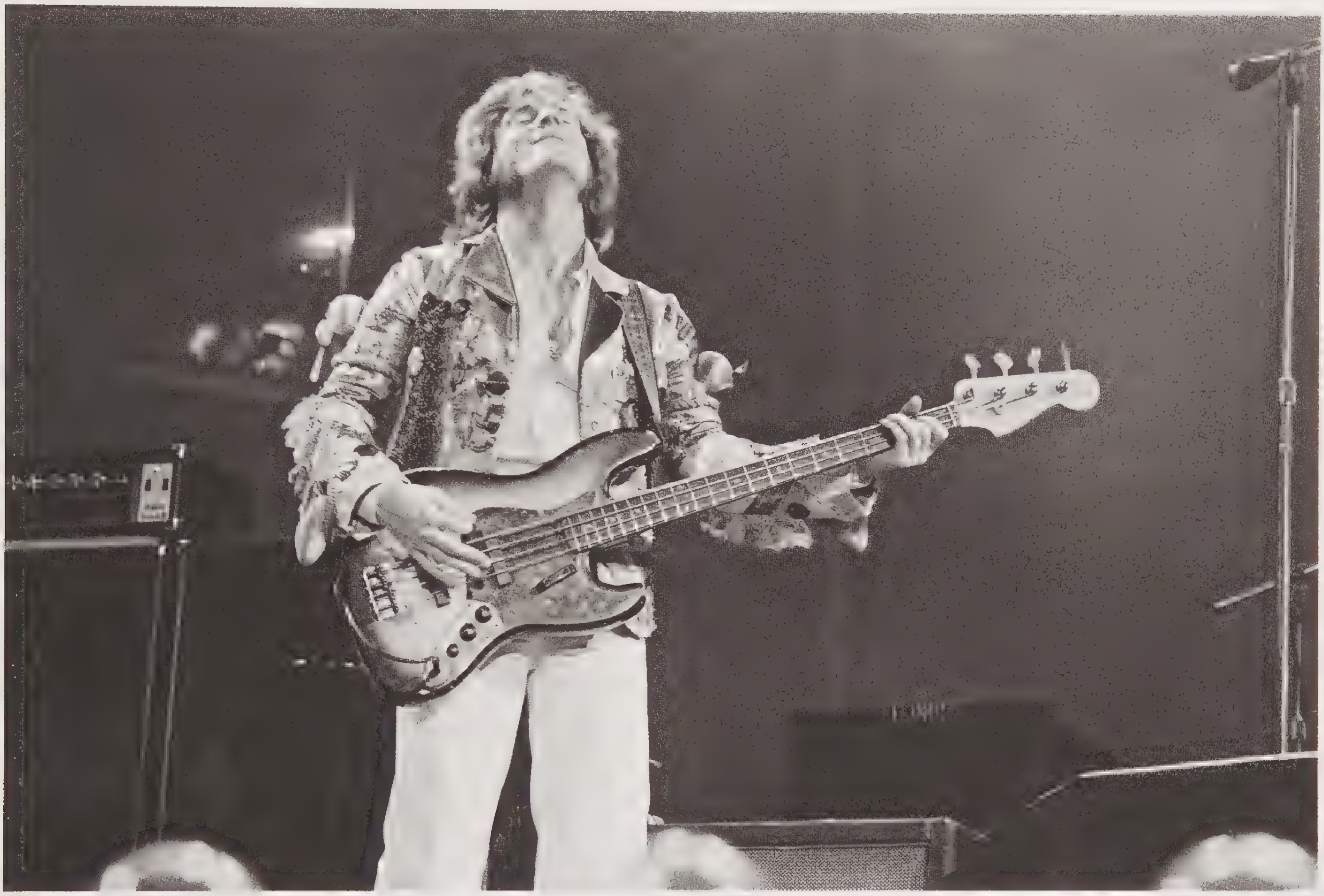
This case of mistaken identity, which is described in various Led Zeppelin biographies, definitely happened, but not to John Paul Jones: "The transvestites were actually friends of Richard [Cole]'s, normally friendly people, and we were all at some bar," explains Jones to *Mojo*. "That I mistook a transvestite for a girl is rubbish; that happened in another country to somebody else..."[68] And the bassist continues: "Stephanie ended up in my room and we rolled a joint or two and I fell asleep and set fire to the hotel room; as you do, ha-ha, and when I woke up it was full of firemen!"[68]

Robert Plant transforms the incident, which could so easily have ended in tragedy, into a quasi-burlesque comedy with a number of juicy innuendos somewhere between Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers. *If you take your pick, be careful how you choose it/Sometimes it's hard to feel it bite; Poor whiskers set that room alight; When I step out, strut down with my sugar/She'd better not talk like Barry White.* In truth, Plant intended the lyrics as his lighthearted revenge, so it is said, after he had heard Jones explaining in an interview how singers played no more than a minor role in rock groups.

Although never performed live, "Royal Orleans" was chosen as the B-side of the one and only single to be taken from *Presence* (the A-side being "Candy Store Rock"). This single was released in 1976 in North

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Around the time of the album's release, "Royal Orleans" was aired on the Alan Freeman show on BBC Radio One with a truncated guitar solo. Was this a discretionary cut designed to respect the radio station's scheduling requirements or an initial mix intended for promotional purposes?



John Paul Jones, the unwilling protagonist of "Royal Orleans," playing his Fender Jazz Bass in May 1975.

America, Japan, and various European countries (including France, West Germany, and Italy), but failed to chart.

Production

"Royal Orleans" is the only track on the album credited to all four members of Led Zeppelin. Following on the heels of "For Your Life," the group now throws themselves into another funk-rock number, and probably one of their best. According to Jimmy Page, this particular musical influence was a result of their frequent nocturnal visits to clubs and discos. The riff that opens this superb track is definitely funky, but it also has a rock and almost rockabilly flavor. Page delivers the riff on two (or possibly three) guitars: in the left-hand channel he plays it in a higher register on two strings (or two guitars), and in the right-hand channel in a lower register. It sounds as if he is using his 1964 Fender Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue for the high parts and his Gibson Les Paul for the others. John Paul Jones supports him on his Fender Jazz Bass and John Bonham on his snare drum. The trio then launches into a pure funk rhythm, Page playing an idiomatic accompaniment, on two guitars positioned in stereo, while Jones and Bonham lay down an extremely sexy groove worthy of the specialists of funk. Robert Plant delivers a very good vocal part, evidently having fun with his lyrics, which he seems to have enjoyed

In the lyrics, Robert Plant mentions a certain John Cameron. This could be the session musician, arranger, and future orchestrator of the worldwide hit musical *Les Misérables*, whom John Paul Jones had known since his pre-Zeppelin days. In 1970, Cameron made a highly successful arrangement of "Whole Lotta Love" for the group CCS, whose leader was none other than Alexis Korner. This would enter the UK charts at number 13 and was used as the theme music of the television show *Top of the Pops*.

recording. On the subject of Plant's singing, the companion disc to the deluxe edition includes an alternative mix dating from November 12, 1975, on which the lead vocal is much deeper and sounds nothing like Plant. Jimmy Page, who could not identify him either to start with (!) sheds some light on the identity of the singer: "I played it to Robert and he replied it's his vocals so I am going to take it that it is. [...] I must admit when I first heard it I thought it might be John Bonham but it's Robert. That is what is there."[109] After the first verse, the group reprises the riff, with Page doubling his Gibson (on the right, from 0:27), before launching into the next section, in which he reinforces his two rhythm parts. Another verse follows, after which the riff comes back (0:53). This time, Bonzo alters his accompaniment, foregrounding a sixteenth-note pattern on his hi-hat, combining binary rhythm and shuffle. The band then plays another verse, resuming the earlier funky rhythm. After this Jimmy Page launches into a solo, the key having shifted up a tone (from 1:28). Here he is most probably playing his Les Paul, with generous reverb applied. As always, his licks are incisive, rocky, and full of feeling. Unlike those on the preceding two tracks, this solo is relatively short at just eight bars.

At 1:55, Bonham adds a conga part. The last time he recorded congas was on "Whole Lotta Love" in 1969. If he was not particularly convincing in the role back then, the opposite is true on "Royal Orleans," where his playing is excellent and complements his work on the Ludwig perfectly. Robert Plant develops a more aggressive, more rhythm 'n' soul feel, supported by a new accompanying riff that Page weaves for him. This fourth verse breaks off abruptly without any pickup to connect it to the following section; instead there are three seconds of

The four members of Led Zeppelin by the fireplace in their Boeing 707 during the tenth American tour, 1975.

silence. This attention-grabbing void is a technique often employed in R&B.

The last verse follows directly from the previous one, after which the track ends with a reprise of the riff. This stops dead at 2:56 without any final reverb or delay.

"Royal Orleans" is one of the better cuts of the album, the four members of Led Zeppelin demonstrating a new role as masters of funk rock. Far superior to "The Crunge," this is definitely a track to (re)discover.

NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:15

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recording and Mixing
Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany:
November 1975
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The version of "Nobody's Fault but Mine" selected for inclusion on the *Led Zeppelin DVD* (2003) is that performed by the band at the Knebworth Festival in 1979.

Genesis

"Nobody's Fault but Mine" is possibly the most perfect example, and undoubtedly the last, of the kind of blues reimagining the four members of Led Zeppelin had been doing ever since the sessions for their first album. "Robert came in one day and suggested we cover it ["Nobody's Fault but Mine"], but the arrangement I came up with was nothing to do with the [Blind Willie Johnson] original. Robert may have wanted to go for the original blues lyrics, but everything else was a totally different kettle of fish."[9]

The Led Zeppelin version is indeed very different from that recorded by Blind Willie Johnson in 1927. The words also differ substantially. In the case of the blues pioneer, a street preacher in his native Texas, the only thing that can save the narrator from eternal damnation is religion (*I have a Bible in my home/If I don't read it my soul be lost*) and he thanks his father and mother for making him read the holy book. In other words, if he goes to hell, it will be nobody's fault but his own.

In Led Zeppelin's case, there is no mention of the Bible, even if the main character also needs to save his soul as he finds himself in the clutches of the devil. Robert Plant has taken up Blind Willie Johnson's key phrase, *Nobody's fault but mine*, but has adapted it to Robert Johnson's message in "Hellhound on My Trail" (1937): everything possible must be done to escape the power of evil (embodied by the *hellhound*), even if this means running away. Two country blues in one, then, enabling the Led Zeppelin singer to deliver a message of universal significance: we are responsible for our own actions and it is futile to try to blame others.

Blind Willie Johnson's country blues is rooted in the African American community of the Southern states at the end of the twenties. Over the subsequent decades, his song was covered and adapted by numerous performers from Sister Rosetta Tharpe (1949) to Lucinda Williams (2016) via the Staple Singers (1965), John Renbourn

Blind Willie Johnson, who recorded "Nobody's Fault but Mine" in 1927.

(1967), Nina Simone (1969), and the Grateful Dead (1993). However, none of these recordings achieves the intensity of Led Zeppelin's. It would not be inappropriate to talk of the British quartet's version as a total re-creation, which was perhaps the reason why Robert Plant and Jimmy Page did not see fit to add the name of Blind Willie Johnson alongside their own in the credits.

Led Zeppelin performed "Nobody's Fault but Mine" live from the North American tour of 1977 to their final shows of 1980. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and Jason Bonham also played it at the Ahmet Ertegun Tribute Concert on December 10, 2007. Previously, in 1994, Page and Plant had recorded a superb acoustic version for the album *No Quarter: Jimmy Page and Robert Plant Unledded* (1994), in which Plant reincorporates a line from Blind Willie Johnson's original (*I have a Bible in my home*).

Production

It is with this blues-rock epic that the second side of the original vinyl album opens. Like "Achilles Last Stand," the track starts with a fade-in. Jimmy Page sets the ball rolling with a blues riff recorded on three tracks with his Gibson Les Paul "Number One." The riff is effectively doubled in stereo in order to broaden the sound, and tripled on slide (an octave higher) at the center of the stereo image (from 0:25). In all likelihood, the sound is distorted by the Marshall 1959SLP/Marshall 1982 configuration. Above all, it is colored by strong phasing obtained most probably from the guitarist's Eventide PS 101 Instant Phaser. Jimmy Page would be criticized for taking his inspiration from the Blind Willie Johnson version, but a comparison of the two melodies reveals little resemblance between Page's and the brilliant guitarist-preacher's. We are dealing here with the blues, whose very essence, as with any popular music, is the transmission of cultural heritage—within the boundaries of honesty, it goes without saying. Page has certainly not crossed these boundaries in "Nobody's Fault but Mine." He has rewritten a piece of work and made it his own.

Robert Plant then gives a scat rendering of the guitarist's melody as a kind of gospel lamentation (from 0:49). Very quickly, however, the drums and bass bring the band around to a more typical Led Zep feel (1:14). John Bonham makes a resounding entry, hammering the crash cymbals and bass drum of his Ludwig kit. John Paul Jones supports him on his superb eight-string bass, the BecVar Series I Triple Omega, with its big sound and incredible harmonic richness. The group then launches into a rock rhythm, Jimmy Page now playing without phasing in the right-hand channel. Plant attacks his vocal line in a steady, assured voice, giving no indication of his difficulties in singing with his leg in a cast. When it comes to the blues, the Led Zeppelin singer is immediately on home ground, displaying all the flair that had made him one of the leading British interpreters of the genre.

The second verse begins after a short silence observed by all the musicians. This is a highly effective, although

John Bonham at the Forum in Los Angeles on March 24, 1975. He is playing his amber Ludwig Vistalite kit with Plexiglas drums.

by no means easy, way of relaunching the number, and one they would return to. "It was meant to be tricky, with the stops and the pauses and the phased guitar,"[110] Jimmy Page would later say of the track. At the end of the third verse, Plant resumes his scat singing, a calque of Page's riff (at 2:24), Jones and Bonham joining in with a fairly unusual accompaniment based on a challenging but extremely effective syncopated rhythm (from 2:37). There then follows a harmonica solo from Plant, his first since "When the Levee Breaks" on the fourth album. His phrasing is superb: sensual and incredibly bluesy. The British singer, with such a boundless admiration for Sonny Boy Williamson that he even filched one of the bluesman's harmonicas in 1965, sets this track on fire (from 3:01). It should also be pointed out that his bandmates provide him with emphatic support, Bonzo concentrating intently on his groove and the power of his attack.

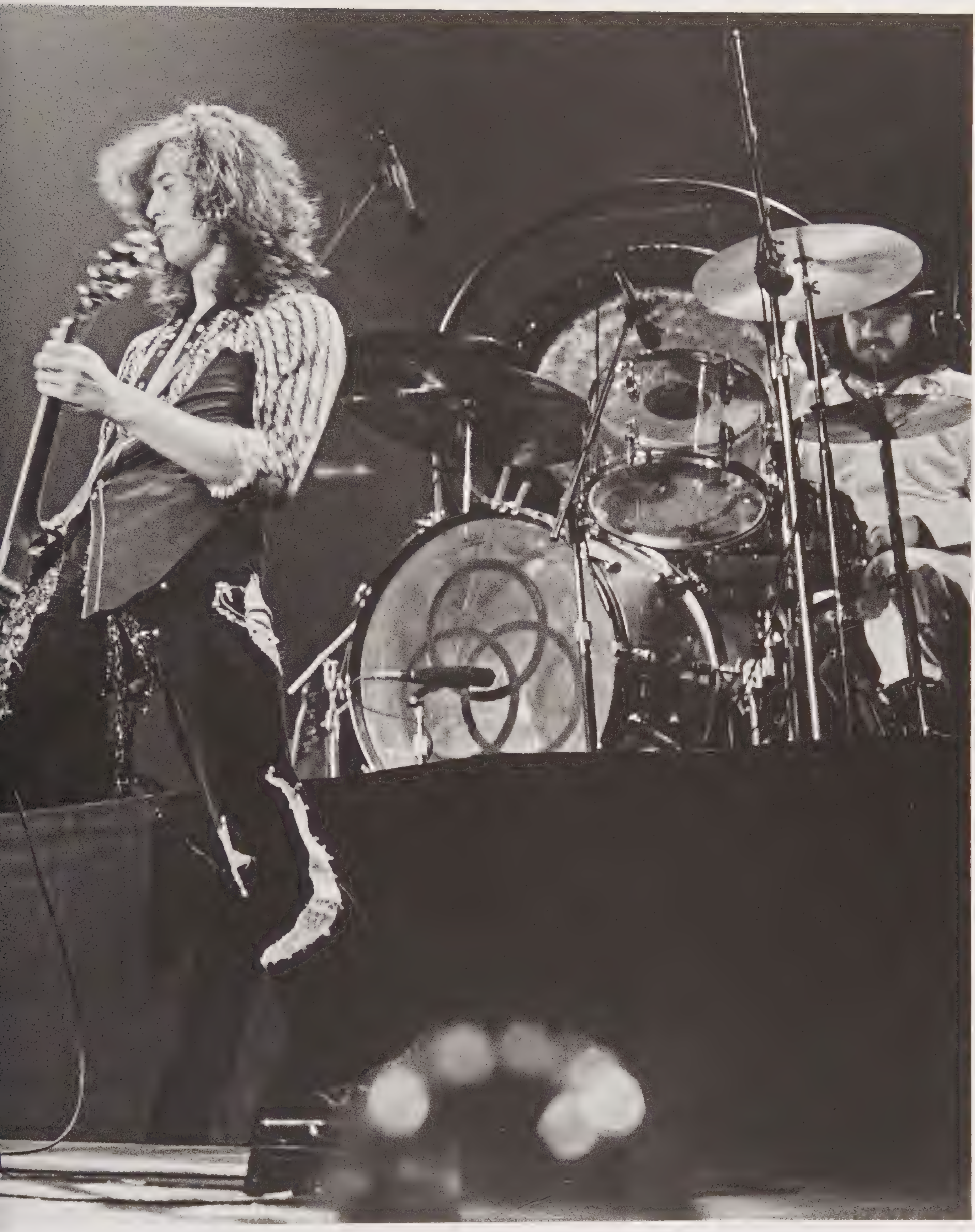
After the final two verses, the transition between them marked by another three-second silence (at 4:30), it is Jimmy Page's turn to play a solo (from 4:48). As is his custom, the guitarist plays his Les Paul with an abundance of feeling, and although more rock than blues, his performance is every bit equal to Plant's.

The track closes with a new scat sequence accompanied by Jones and Bonham's syncopated rhythm, some concluding words sung by Plant, and a final bass-guitar-drums hook.

"Nobody's Fault but Mine" and "Achilles Last Stand," each of which opens a side of *Presence*, are without a shadow of doubt the most successful tracks on the album—despite being diametrically opposed stylistically. With this incredible blues, Led Zeppelin reminds us that the band had drawn their original strength and inspiration from the genre, which they would never stop playing throughout their illustrious career—and always with talent and enthusiasm. As Jimmy Page would himself declare: "When you hear that, you say, 'My goodness gracious, these guys are on fire here.'"[110]

PAiSTe

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham at Madison Square Garden on February 12, 1975.



CANDY STORE ROCK

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:10

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitar, acoustic guitar
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums

Recording and Mixing

Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany: November 1975

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

"Candy Store Rock" was reportedly composed, set to words, and then recorded all in the studio, and at lightning speed due to the imminent arrival at Musicland of the Rolling Stones, who were themselves in a hurry to get down to business with their *Black and Blue* sessions. "This was me trying to be Ral Donner,"[10] explains Robert Plant. The Led Zeppelin singer is alluding here to the rock 'n' roll pioneer best known for his near-perfect imitation of Elvis Presley, as attested by "Girl of My Best Friend" (a 1959 cover of the King) and "You Don't Know What You've Got (Until You Lose It)" (Donner's biggest hit in the United States, dating from two years later).

What the four members of Led Zeppelin are proposing, then, during the four-plus minutes of "Candy Store Rock" is a return to the energy of rockabilly. While Jimmy Page plays the part of Cliff Gallup (Gene Vincent's guitarist) or James Burton (Elvis Presley's), Robert Plant, whose voice sounds like something out of Sam Phillips's Sun Studios, cheekily piles on the innuendo: *You're looking good enough to eat/Don't believe I've tasted this before; I like your honey and it sure likes me/I got my spoon inside your jar; Sugar sister on a silver plate/Need a mouthful and I just can't wait.*

"Candy Store Rock" was released in various countries as the A-side of the only single taken from *Presence* (with "Royal Orleans" on the flip side), but failed to chart in either the United States or Europe. The song never found its way onto a concert set list during the Led Zeppelin days, but Jimmy Page and Robert Plant performed it at the Montreux Jazz Festival (within the context of the Tribute to Sun Records' Night) on July 7, 2001.

Production

Although "Candy Store Rock" was written and recorded in record time, the results do not sound rushed. Quite the opposite, in fact. This tribute to rockabilly is a tour de force, with the four musicians delivering a remarkable

The singer (and Elvis Presley clone) Ral Donner, Robert Plant's model for his vocal performance in "Candy Store Rock."

Ral Donner was probably the most famous of the Elvis Presley clones, and it was entirely natural that producer David L. Wolper and directors Malcolm Leo and Andrew Solt should choose him to narrate the documentary *This Is Elvis* (1981).

performance. It is Jimmy Page who launches the track, playing what sounds like his 1964 Stratocaster (on the left). There is quite a bit of distortion, obtained, according to various sources, from a Fender amp of uncertain model. A reasonably short delay has also been applied and there is light reverb, again deriving from the amp. Page's intro is a blend of blues rock and rockabilly, with certain phrases reminiscent of Elvis Presley's "Mystery Train."

The group then launches into the first verse, with Robert Plant's voice colored by slapback echo, a typical fifties effect. His performance clearly differs from his usual style of delivery, with his voice by and large confined, Ral Donner–style, to a lower register. An undying fan of Elvis, Plant can be felt getting into the spirit of the occasion. It is not by chance that he has identified "Candy Store Rock" as one of his favorite songs on the album (along with "Achilles Last Stand"). The singer is supported by an incredible drum part from John Bonham, who plays with a certain finesse and swing but also with impressive energy. His playing makes prominent use of the bell of one of his cymbals, which is omnipresent throughout the track. It goes without saying that it is above all Bonzo's love of the jazz drummers that inspires the light and floating pulse that he maintains with a firm but not over-strong hand and with astonishing use of his snare drum. John Paul Jones supports him on his Jazz Bass with a line that hugs Page's guitar, supported in turn by Bonham's bass drum. Meanwhile the guitarist strums the album's one and only acoustic guitar part, most likely on his Martin D-28, in the right-hand channel. The ensemble provides a sense of absolutely thrilling speed.

After the third verse, Jimmy Page plays an excellent solo on his Stratocaster, flinging out some unexpected and wonderfully effective dissonances (from 1:29). These are followed by various excellent licks blending blues rock and rockabilly, as in the intro. The solo is followed at 1:53 by a bridge onto which Bonham has apparently overdubbed a rimshot sequence (in the right-hand channel). After two more verses there is another bridge with the same use of the rimshot (from 3:00). The track ends with an outro that suffers from a number of rhythmic hesitations, particularly in Page's acoustic guitar part (for example at 3:43). It is interesting to note that Plant harmonizes with himself on the phrase *it's alright* (for example 3:22, 3:32, 3:40).

"Candy Store Rock" is a very good track, a refreshing diversion that seems to have fired the enthusiasm of the four members of Led Zeppelin.

HOTS ON FOR NOWHERE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:42

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recording and Mixing
Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany: November 1975
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

"Hots On for Nowhere" is included on the soundtrack of *Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2001), a documentary about the pioneering Zephyr skateboard team (Jay Adams, Tony Alva, et al.) directed by Stacy Peralta). "Achilles Last Stand" also features on the soundtrack, as do "Paranoid" by Black Sabbath, "Rebel Rebel" by David Bowie, and "Foxy Lady" and "Bold as Love" by Jimi Hendrix…

Genesis

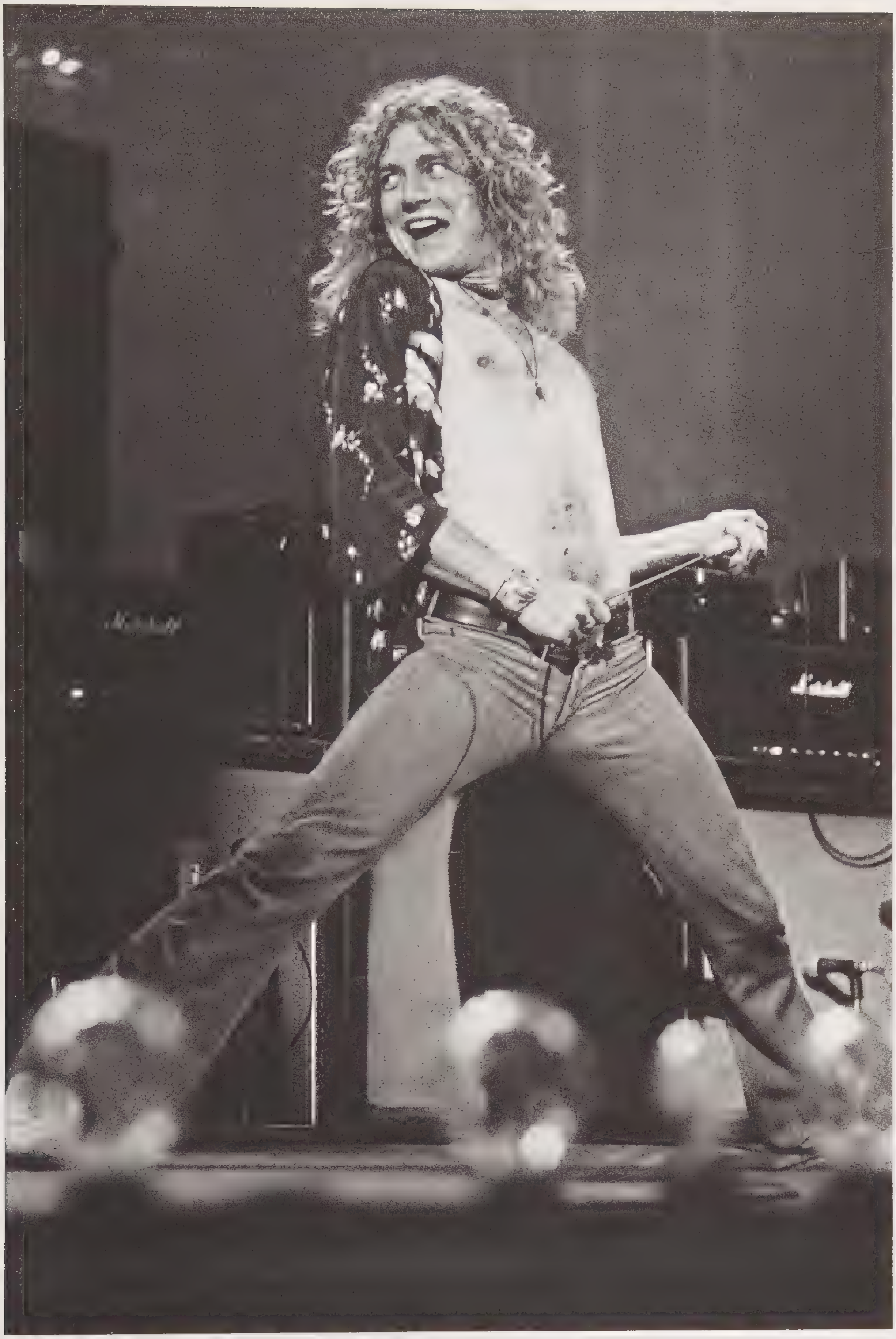
Like "Candy Store Rock," "Hots On for Nowhere" was composed and recorded in a hurry in the studio in Munich. The words, on the other hand, had been written by Robert Plant in Malibu a few weeks before. Whether because of his accident, his convalescence, or uncertainty regarding his own future or that of Led Zeppelin, the lines he set down combine nostalgia with a certain bitterness. The nostalgia is for childhood: harnessing a reindeer; a melted snowman. It is also a mysterious, disturbing universe with a touch of Tolkienesque fantasy about it: *Corner of Bleecker and nowhere, in the land of not-quite day/A shiver ran down my backbone, my face in the mirror turned gray. Bleecker* is presumably Bleecker Street, the main artery of Greenwich Village.

And then there is the bitterness: *Got friends who will give me fuck-all.* This line is unforgiving, irrevocable. Was Robert Plant thinking of the other members of Led Zeppelin and of Peter Grant when he wrote these words? Or of the fans that might abandon him? One thing is for sure: the narrator-protagonist has been overcome by a Baudelairean melancholy. *While the hope in my hands turns to clay/I don't ask that my field is full of clover.* The unfortunate soul has lost his way, his hope, and doesn't know when or even whether he will rediscover it…

This is another song that Led Zeppelin never performed live, although Jimmy Page played it with the Black Crowes on their 2000 American tour.

Production

"Hots On for Nowhere" reportedly first saw the light of day during the sessions for Physical Graffiti. It is also believed to derive from a recycling of improvised riffs on the live versions of "Dazed and Confused" and to have been inspired by the rock spirit that dominates "Walter's Walk," a track on *Coda* dating from 1972. The reason for this is that "Hots On for Nowhere" is



Robert Plant at Earl's Court Arena. In "Hots On for Nowhere" the Led Zeppelin singer plunges back into Tolkien's fantasy world.

first and foremost an excellent rock track that flirts with rockabilly in a variety of ways, but above all in the fantastic rhythm laid down by that swing machine John Bonham. Whereas Bonham's rhythm accomplice John Paul Jones keeps a relatively low profile on this album (except on "Achilles Last Stand" and "Nobody's Fault but Mine"), Bonzo's star shines brightly. His accompaniment offers yet another demonstration of his ability to groove. He imparts an irresistible shuffle to the track, deriving mainly from his work on the hi-hat. Bonham is at ease, his jazz roots and rock power enabling him to deliver a unique performance despite the relatively complex structure (for example the inclusion of numerous pauses and stops, as on

several of the other tracks on *Presence*). For his part, Jimmy Page delivers some superb guitar parts—on what sounds like his 1964 Fender Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue—over this inspired foundation. The guitarist is supported by the dream groove provided by Bonham, and lays down a distinctly rock 'n' roll accompaniment (on the right), that constitutes the other characteristically rockabilly aspect of the track. Furthermore the color and general feel of "Hots On for Nowhere" recall the sound of the Stray Cats, and more specifically Brian Setzer's guitar.

Following a short guitar/bass/drum intro, Robert Plant starts his lead vocal in a reasonably light voice, adopting an almost narrative tone. At the end of the second verse he launches into a series of slightly quirky but amusing *la la la la las* that he doubles and performs

John Bonham, an incredible swing machine with a knack for combining power and subtlety.

with a certain detachment (from 0:28). This section is followed by a somewhat rockabilly riff that Jimmy Page boosts with a second guitar (on the left). In the fifth verse, Page alters his rhythmic pattern, which keeps going through the pauses of his bandmates, emphasizing the fifties feel of the song and creating an impression of additional speed (from 1:24). Bonham then resumes his accompaniment with fills on the snare drum and crash cymbals, which he strikes vigorously, causing the tension to mount (from 1:34). A funky guitar sequence follows, with Plant singing *oh oh oh*s (recorded on two tracks) in the background (from 1:53). Jimmy Page then launches straight into a solo on his Strat, with very present reverb from his amp, in all likelihood his Vox AC30/6. He seeks out unusual and occasionally dissonant licks in a desire to reinvent himself each time. He also uses his whammy bar, notably at the end of his solo, where he creates a dive bomb that pans around the stereo field (2:42).

In the next verse, Plant has fully rediscovered his rock timbre. Bonham switches rhythm to a sort of shuffle (2:51) accentuated on the snare drum, demonstrating that, like Page, he too has an urge to surprise. Another refrain follows, and then a sequence in which rockabilly guitar (on the left) answers the Fender (on the right), while the Led Zeppelin singer delivers an excellent lead vocal (from 3:12) despite the discomfort of having his leg in plaster.

Jimmy Page suddenly interrupts the track with a rock lick colored by slapback echo (3:50), bringing to mind Chuck Berry, which he then repeats on two guitars. The track continues with a surge of guitar, voice, and crash cymbal before concluding with Page reprising the Chuck Berry–style riff on his Strat, double-tracked and positioned in stereo.

"Hots On for Nowhere" is a very good rock track. It is a blend of rockabilly, funk, and blues rock that once again underlines the desire of the four musicians to return to their roots.

TEA FOR ONE

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 9:27

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recording and Mixing
Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany: November 1975
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Keith Harwood
Assistant Sound Engineer: Jeremy Gee
Mixing: Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

"We had just finished a tour, Robert was in a cast, so I think everybody was homesick. Our attitude was summed up in the lyrics to 'Tea for One,'"[10] said Jimmy Page. The closing song on *Presence* is above all a reflection of what Robert Plant was feeling at that time. The Led Zeppelin singer had written the lyrics in Malibu shortly before the start of the Munich sessions. "I was just sitting in that wheelchair and getting morose. 'Tea for One' was very personal. I couldn't get back to the woman and children I loved. It was like…is this rock 'n' roll thing really anything at all?"[74] Peter Grant would later aver: "That was Maureen's song."[24]

One minute seems like a lifetime; Sitting, looking at the clock, oh time moves so slow: in these lines Robert Plant expresses the full weight of his solitude. But then he recalls happier times: *To sing a song for you, I recall you used to say "Oh, baby, this one's for we two"…which in the end is you anyway.* We are a long way here from the bluesmen who used to employ various metaphors to help them deal with their troubles, their sadness. Robert Plant is speaking from the heart, and as a result his words hit home all the more effectively.

In terms of both the lyrics and the musical atmosphere, it is difficult to avoid comparing "Tea for One" with "Since I've Been Loving You," a comparison Jimmy Page himself made during an interview for *Trouser Press*: "Yet the blues we did, like 'Tea for One,' was the only time I think we've ever gotten close to repeating the mood of another of our numbers, 'Since I've Been Loving You.' The chordal structure is similar, a minor blues. We just wanted to get a really laid-back blues feeling without blowing out on it at all."[37]

"Tea for One" was never performed live during the Led Zeppelin years. However, Page and Plant played it in its entirety in their 1995 and 1996 concerts in Japan, and during their 1995 UK tour the singer incorporated

The lyrics of "Tea for One" convey the malaise felt by the singer after his accident, but also, and most important, his love for his wife Maureen.

COVER

Joe Bonamassa made a very good cover of "Tea for One" in 2006 for his album *You & Me.*

various phrases from "Tea for One" into "Since I've Been Loving You"...

Production

The first twenty seconds of "Tea for One" have absolutely nothing to do with a slow blues. They sound more like the start of a Led Zeppelin rock number with a killer riff and a heavy, driving rhythm. Jimmy Page delivers a hypnotic lick as only he can. This is played on his Gibson Les Paul (doubled) and distorted most likely through his Marshall. There is an underlying influence of the Orient, albeit an Orient revisited in hard-rock style and supported by John Bonham's magisterial Ludwig and John Paul Jones's tentacular bass. Page enriches his riff with two more guitar parts: a first that answers on the left in a higher register and a second in the center. Although the sound quality of the recordings made at Musicland Studios is excellent, it is difficult not to feel a certain nostalgia for the live feel of Headley Grange, especially where Bonzo's drumming is concerned.

All of a sudden, after these few bars of pure rock (from 0:21), the song plunges into a slow and completely unexpected 12/8 blues. The effect is dramatic and the transition superbly accomplished. With his work on the ride cymbal, Bonham lends the rhythm a sense of weightlessness, briefly recalling the beginning of "Nights in White Satin" by the Moody Blues. That is where the comparison ends, however, because Jimmy Page immediately enters on his Gibson with a C-minor blues progression that he arpeggiates with infinite delicacy. One can feel him in direct contact with his emotions as he searches for the ultimate note or chord. Before long, Page launches into solo phrases of real beauty. Unfortunately, from the very first bars, the sublime "Since I've Been Loving You" comes to mind. This masterpiece, recorded in 1970, immediately corrupts our judgment, preventing us from listening to "Tea for One" with neutral ears. Our task is made all the more difficult by Page's recycling of some of the same phrases he had played back then (for example at 0:44). Notwithstanding this similarity between the two blues, the guitarist maintains his sublime improvisation until Robert Plant's vocal entry. He also adds a distorted rhythm guitar in the left-hand channel (from 0:45). Barely audible at first, this can gradually be heard asserting itself within the musical texture in order to support the harmony of the track. The choice of certain chords (for example at 0:55) may come as something of a surprise, as may a curious rhythm at 1:08, but as we have seen, Jimmy Page is a genuinely creative individual on a permanent quest for originality, for the unusual.

Robert Plant begins his lead vocal in a gentle voice full of melancholy, reinforced by generous reverb (from 1:32). He too is laying bare his soul. Suffering from the absence of his wife, this is what he puts into song. Jimmy Page would later refer to "Tea for One" as a poignant song, and it is certainly true that between his own performance and Plant's, emotion is present at every moment. In expressing his feelings with such abundant sincerity, the singer pays a very fine tribute to the woman with whom he had been sharing his life since 1966.

Jimmy Page reverses the roles of his two guitars: the one that had opened the blues section with a superb improvisation now plays rhythm (on the right) and the other lead (on the left). Bonham maintains a light accompaniment, strongly influenced by the jazz drummers he so admired, with the ride cymbal predominating and every one of his strokes imbued with swing. Meanwhile John Paul Jones's bass line, necessarily simple, provides his bandmates with the perfect rhythmic and harmonic support.

John Paul Jones and Jimmy Page, two extraordinary musicians pooling their talent in this outstanding slow blues.

A Sincere and Moving Blues

After an instrumental break in which rock reasserts itself and the bass drum, crash cymbals, and guitars are called into frenetic action (3:53), Jimmy Page launches into a superb solo on his Gibson Les Paul, a task he had been dreading, as he explains: "We did two takes in the end, one with a guitar solo and one without. I ended up sitting there thinking, 'I've got this guitar solo to do,' because there have been blues guitar solos since Eric on *Five Live Yardbirds* and everyone's done a good one. I was really a bit frightened of it. I thought, 'What's to be done?' I didn't want to blast out the solo like a locomotive or something, because it wasn't conductive to the vibe of the rest of the track. I was extremely aware that you had to do something different than just some B. B. King licks."[37] As a result, his lyrical, bluesy playing at no point succumbs to the clichés of the genre. Page clearly puts a great deal of himself into this improvisation, and the result is a thing of beauty. His notes literally soar, carried by magnificent reverb from the EMT 140 plate, his licks occasionally flirting with jazz, but always returning to the blues rock that lies at the very soul of this guitarist.

After a solo of more than two minutes' duration from a deeply inspired Jimmy Page at the top of his form, Robert Plant takes to the mic again for another, equally melancholy performance (from 6:14). He appears not to be hampered in the least by his injured leg. On the contrary, the temporary infirmity has perhaps enabled him to delve a little deeper into his soul, enabling him to produce a performance of such enormous sincerity and pathos. Page continues his two-guitar accompaniment, the instrument on the right slightly out of tune and that on the left delivering some excellent licks that eventually bring the track to its resolution. The end, when it comes, seems a little hurried and over-conventional (from 9:18).

"Tea for One" is one of Led Zeppelin's last great blues numbers, a new lesson in feeling from the four outstanding Englishmen constantly on the lookout for new ways of expressing their musical vision. This is a magisterial conclusion to an album that bears all the hallmarks of a struggle against adversity.

Ad magnisi maximendi netur ihiciducim id minis re necat officius mi, admitam vent.

10 RIBS & ALL / CARROT POD POD (POD)

Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones / 6:49

Musicians: Jimmy Page: electric guitar, acoustic guitar / **John Paul Jones:** bass, piano / **John Bonham:** drums / **Recording and Mixing: Musicland Studios, Munich, West Germany:** November 17, 1975 / **Technical Team: Producer:** Jimmy Page / **Executive Producer:** Peter Grant / **Sound Engineer:** Keith Harwood / **Assistant Sound Engineer:** Jeremy Gee / **Mixing:** Jimmy Page, Keith Harwood

Genesis

What was Robert Plant doing on November 17, 1975? That is the day on which “10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod),” an instrumental based around John Paul Jones’s atmospheric piano, with Jimmy Page and John Bonham contributing in the second half, was recorded at Musicland Studios in Munich.

The bizarre and mysterious title of this track evokes the elongated titles of the sixties (for example *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* by the Beatles, *Their Satanic Majesties Request* by the Rolling Stones, Procol Harum’s hit “A Whiter Shade of Pale,” “A Quick One, While He’s Away” by the Who, and “Invocation and Ritual Dance of the Young Pumpkin” by Frank Zappa). To look for an explanation is to attempt the impossible. Musically, “10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)” sounds like no other song either on *Presence* or on any of Led Zeppelin’s previous albums. It evidently failed to make it onto the LP because it was so out of keeping with the other tracks.

Production

“10 Ribs & All/Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)” clearly bears the stamp of John Paul Jones. The style differs substantially from Led Zeppelin’s, which only confirms the extraordinary success of the quartet, each of whose members contributed very different musical influences, which, through some incredible alchemy, succeeded in creating an absolutely unique sound and forming a cohesive whole. This instrumental reveals a cooler side to John Paul Jones. He begins with an extended piano intro on the Steinway grand. This is a blend of different musical styles with a bias toward popular jazz and soul, and is reminiscent of Phil Collins and Stevie Wonder. Jones’s playing also recalls that on “Ice Fishing at Night,” an extremely beautiful song on his solo album *The Thunderthief* (2001).

"10 Ribs & All" / "Carrot Pod Pod (Pod)": an instrumental that bears the stamp of John Paul Jones.

Keith Harwood, the sound engineer, must have been somewhat taken aback to discover the sound of this astonishing track, which in no way resembles the others on *Presence*.

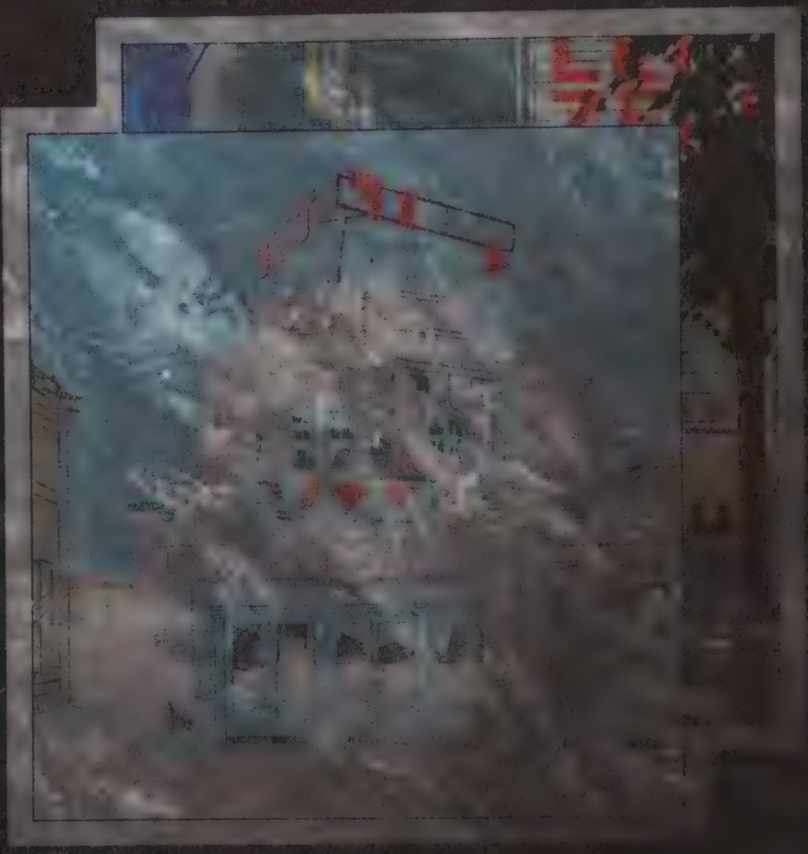
John Paul Jones, as we have seen, opens the number on the piano. The delicate sonority is emphasized by generous reverb, most likely from the EMT 140 plate. The harmonies are rich and jazzy while nevertheless pop, and the overall tonality is on the melancholy side. After a few bars, Jones adds bass guitar, most likely his eight-string BecVar Series I Triple Omega with its distinctive sonority (from 1:10). Jimmy Page then makes a reasonably discreet entry (from 2:28), playing various phrases on an electric guitar, which sounds as if it could be his recently purchased 1953 Fender Telecaster "Botswana Brown." His sound is colored by phasing (from the MXR Phase 90?) and very present reverb. He also records an acoustic guitar, probably his Martin D-28, which comes in at the same time as John Bonham's Ludwig (3:03). Bonzo joins his bandmates with some relatively light drum work, a kind of Tamla Motown groove in which he alternates ride cymbal and hi-hat. Page executes short licks on his Martin before playing a very good riff during the outro, which he doubles on his other guitar (from 5:30).

Jimmy Page has revealed that the track was by no means intended as an instrumental; the idea was that it would be furnished with a Robert Plant vocal: "No, we didn't get to the point where Robert worked on it. So there's no vocal on it, so it was what it is, it's the first pass of the track. If it had had a vocal on, we might have done a different version or whatever."[109] It's a shame that no one has ever taken up the challenge…

THE SOUNDTRACK FROM THE FILM

LED ZEPPELIN

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME



ALBUM

1. ROCK AND ROLL **2.** CELEBRATION DAY **3.** THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME **4.** THE RAIN SONG **5.** DAZED AND CONFUSED **6.** NO QUARTER **7.** STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN **8.** MOBY DICK **9.** WHOLE LOTTA LOVE

FILM

1. ROCK AND ROLL **2.** CELEBRATION DAY **3.** BLACK DOG (BRING IT ON HOME INTRO) **4.** OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY **5.** MISTY MOUNTAIN HOP **6.** SINCE I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU **7.** NO QUARTER **8.** THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME **9.** THE RAIN SONG **10.** THE OCEAN **11.** DAZED AND CONFUSED **12.** STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN **13.** MOBY DICK **14.** HEARTBREAKER **15.** WHOLE LOTTA LOVE

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

ALBUM THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: October 22, 1976
Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER: Swan Song SSK 89402

United States: October 22, 1976
Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER: Swan Song SS 2-201

Number 1 (United Kingdom); Number 2 (United States)

Poster for the movie by Peter Clifton and Joe Massot, which premiered in New York in October 1976.

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME: MOVIE AND SOUNDTRACK

Album

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric and acoustic guitars, theremin
John Paul Jones: bass, keyboards
John Bonham: drums, percussion
Recording
Live, Madison Square Garden, New York: July 1973
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Eddie Kramer

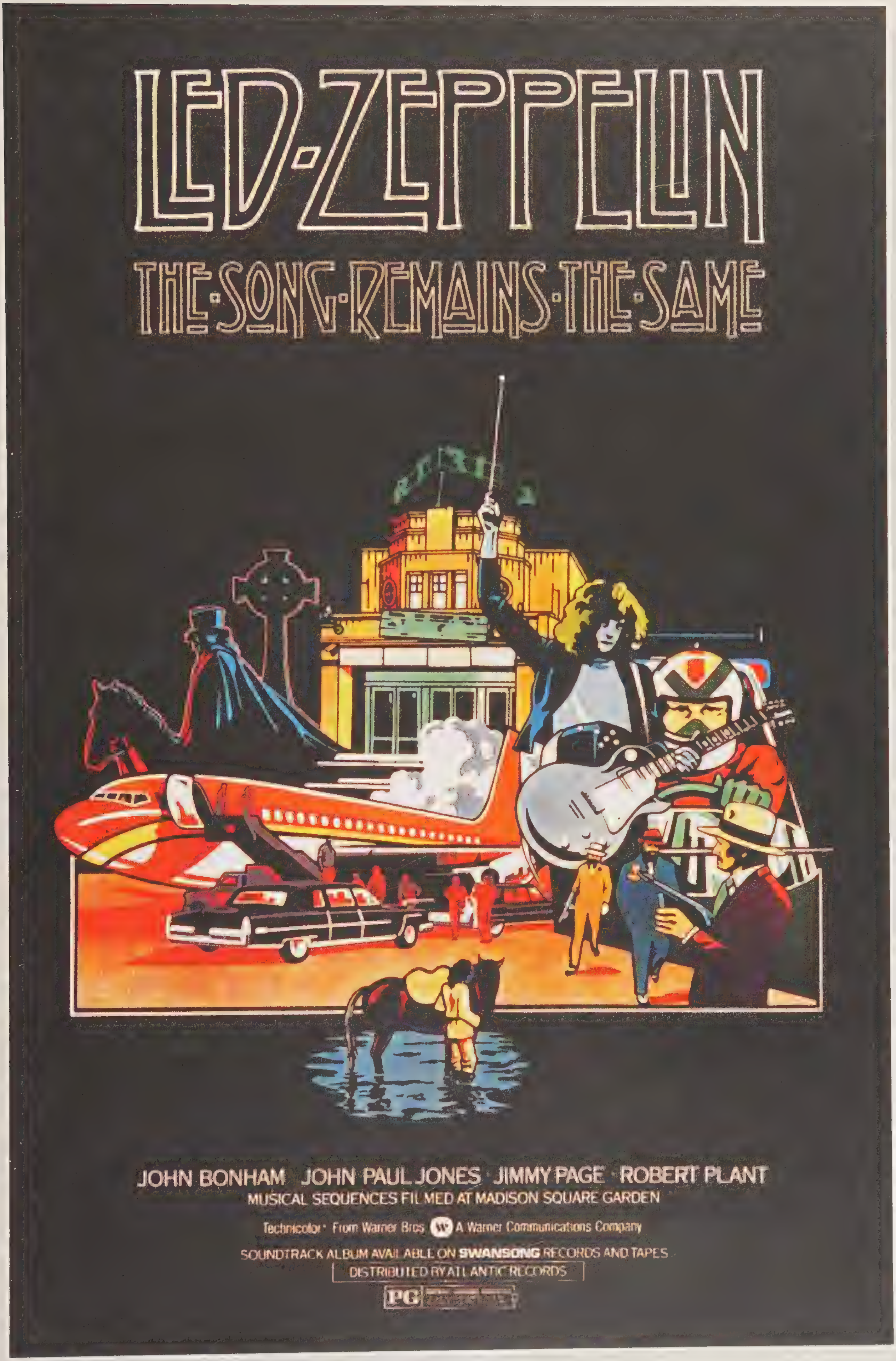
Film

Director: Peter Clifton, Joe Massot
Photography: Ernest Day
Editing: Humphrey Dixon
Distribution: Warner Bros

Is it because he had once been an actor himself? Or because he had adored the Beatles' comedies (*A Hard Day's Night*, 1964, and *Help!* 1965)? Since the end of the sixties, Peter Grant had toyed with the idea of making a movie about Led Zeppelin. Not just a television documentary but a full-length motion picture (for the superior sound quality). An initial attempt had been made on January 9, 1970, when Peter Whitehead and Stanley Dorfman filmed the quartet in action on the stage of the Royal Albert Hall in London, but because the lighting was too dim and the band was going through such rapid changes, the results were not used (although a number of scenes would subsequently be restored and remastered for inclusion in the *Led Zeppelin DVD*). Jimmy Page explains: "By 1973 we had moved on so far in such a short time that we felt the Albert Hall footage was passé in every respect. We looked and dressed differently, and the whole communicative quality of the music had been improved."[9]

Joe Massot's Concept

But that did not mean the idea had been abandoned—particularly as the Stones movie *Gimme Shelter* (1970), directed by the Maysles brothers and Charlotte Zwerin, and the glam rock of T. Rex in *Born to Boogie* (1972),



LED·ZEPPELIN

THE·SONG·REMAINS·THE·SAME

JOHN BONHAM · JOHN PAUL JONES · JIMMY PAGE · ROBERT PLANT

MUSICAL SEQUENCES FILMED AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

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PG

Robert Plant and Jimmy Page filmed at Madison Square Garden in New York on July 29, 1973, for the movie *The Song Remains the Same.*

directed by Ringo Starr, demonstrated that in the early years of the seventies, the rock audience was more than capable of filling movie theaters. The first director to become involved in the project was Joe Massot. An American-born Brit, Massot had made the movie *Wonderwall* (1968)—which boasted a soundtrack by George Harrison—and had gone on to write the script for *Zachariah* (1971), George Englund's rock western featuring Country Joe and the Fish and the James Gang, before leaving for England in 1970. A friend of Charlotte Martin and a true fan of Led Zeppelin—to the extent of going to see the band play the Bath Festival (1970)—the filmmaker also shared Jimmy Page's interest in Aleister Crowley. As a result, the gates of Plumpton Place, where Jimmy and Charlotte were then living, opened up to him. When he returned to London in 1972, it was only natural that it should be the guitarist he talked to about his ambition to make a Led Zeppelin movie in the form of a concert intercut with fictional scenes.

Four highly emblematic images from the rockumentary. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham under the spotlights during three legendary concerts at Madison Square Garden in New York on July 27, 28, and 29, 1973.

After overcoming Peter Grant's reservations (the manager would have preferred a director of international repute), Joe Massot threw himself into the adventure, assisted by Ernie Day (David Lean's cameraman on *Lawrence of Arabia*) and Robert Freeman (who had worked with Richard Lester on the filming of *A Hard Day's Night*). It was 1973 and the four members of Led Zeppelin were in the United States on their ninth American tour. On July 20, an initial meeting, the first between the director and Peter Grant, was held at the Sheraton hotel in Boston. It was agreed that the final three shows of the tour (at Madison Square Garden in New York City on July 27, 28, and 29) would be shot on 35 mm, and the atmospheric scenes (such as the band arriving in the United States on their plane the Starship, the journey by limo to Madison Square Garden, the backstage scenes and so on) would be shot on 16 mm. Responsibility for recording the concerts was entrusted to engineer Eddie Kramer, who had the use of Wally Heider's twenty-four-track mobile recording studio.

Above: John Bonham on his Harley (still from *The Song Remains the Same*). **Opposite:** Jimmy Page dressed as a hermit for a flamboyant performance of "Dazed and Confused."

From Concert Stage to Fictional Cameo

After the three New York shows, filming of which had gone ahead in spite of a strike by the American entertainment union, shooting continued in England in October. "We didn't just want a concert film," explains Joe Massot, "we wanted to show them as individuals, but not in the traditional way with interviews. They wanted more symbolic representations of themselves."[7]

Hence the scenes of an entirely fictional nature that punctuate the rockumentary: Peter Grant and Richard Cole as Prohibition-era gangsters; Peter Grant at the wheel of a 1920s Bentley with his wife Gloria by his side; Robert Plant, his wife, and their two children by a river in Wales; John Bonham driving his tractor on his farm in Worcestershire; John Paul Jones at home in Sussex, reading a story to his two daughters and then spending time with his wife in the kitchen; Jimmy Page in the park of Plumpton Place, his manor house in East Sussex; Jones again (to the accompaniment of "No Quarter"), transformed into a horror movie hero; Plant (to "The Rain Song") as a seafarer and/or knight of the Holy Grail hastening to rescue a damsel from imprisonment in Raglan Castle in Wales; Jimmy Page (to "Dazed and Confused") climbing up the sheer side of a mountain at whose summit he comes face-to-face with a hermit mage who is none other than Page himself (his face rejuvenated all the way back to embryo stage).

The four members of Led Zeppelin with Peter Grant at the premiere of the movie in London on November 4, 1976.

Clifton Enters the Picture

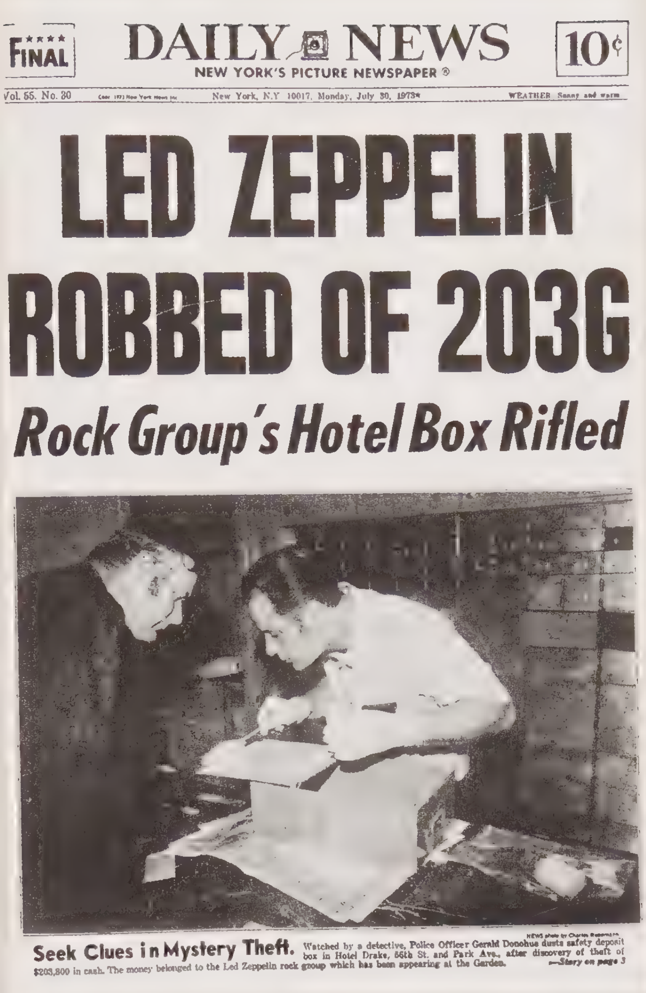
By the end of 1973, Joe Massot had completed the shooting and was ready to start editing the documentary. Before doing so, he invited Peter Grant, the four members of Led Zeppelin, and their entourage to a screening of the part where the band performs "Stairway to Heaven." Within a few minutes, utter astonishment reigned, with neither Page nor Plant nor Jones nor Bonham liking what they saw. Next to them, various individuals even started to whistle. And then an oppressive silence descended. The movie crew had failed to shoot parts of certain songs, such as the verses. "We surmised that they were probably stoned—it was quite as simple as that. Everybody was stoned at the time, but at least we did *our* job."[9]

The verdict was not long in coming: Joe Massot was invited to return to Hollywood. Who could be brought in to repair the damage? Peter Grant entrusted the task to Peter Clifton, an Australian director who had already turned his lens on the rock scene a number of times, with *Popcorn* (1969), which featured artists including the Animals, the Bee Gees, and Joe Cocker; and *Sound of the City: London 1964–1973* (1973), with Cat Stevens, Jimi Hendrix, the Rolling Stones, and others. "We knew Peter Clifton because years back he'd come to us to do a film and showed Jimmy and I a load of clips in a viewing theatre off Wardour Street. There were shots of Jimi Hendrix that he had filmed,"[7] recalls Peter Grant. "So after it didn't work out with Joe, we searched for this Australian Clifton and found he lived in Holland Park. We offered him the salvage job of the Massot mess."[7]

Clifton patiently viewed Massot's rushes (once they had been recovered from the director) and came to the conclusion that certain scenes would have to be reshot in order to make the overall thing more homogeneous. This was to be done at Shepperton Studios in Middlesex. "I'm sort of miming at Shepperton to what I'd played at Madison Square Garden, but of course, although I've got a rough approximation of what I was playing from

LED ZEPPELIN
"THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME"
CINEMA I

The crowd outside Cinema 1 in New York for the premiere of *The Song Remains the Same.*



FINAL ★★★★

DAILY NEWS

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Vol. 55. No. 30 New York, N.Y 10017, Monday, July 30, 1973* WEATHER Sunny and warm

LED ZEPPELIN ROBBED OF 203G

Rock Group's Hotel Box Rifled

Seek Clues in Mystery Theft. Watched by a detective, Police Officer Gerald Donohue dusts safety deposit box in Hotel Drake, 56th St. and Park Ave., after discovery of theft of $203,800 in cash. The money belonged to the Led Zeppelin rock group which has been appearing at the Garden. —Story on page 3

The theft of $186,700 from the Drake Hotel made the front pages, including that of the *Daily News.*

night to night, it's not exact," explained Jimmy Page to *Uncut* in May 2008. "So the film that came out in the '70s is a bit warts-and-all."[79] It is true that various sequences are quite simply out of sync but, as the guitarist would comment, "It was just something fun for the cinema."[9]

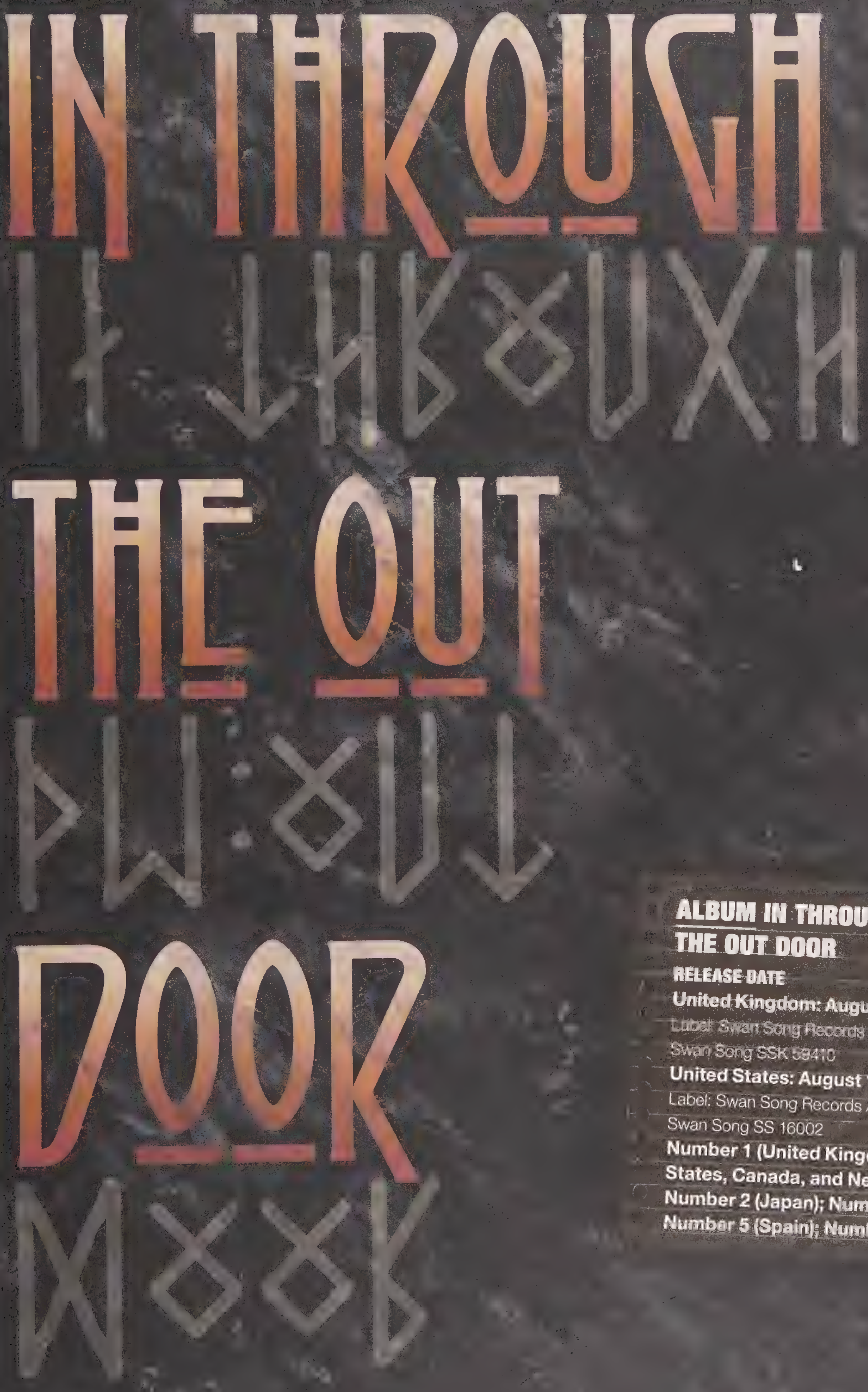
The Song Remains the Same, which takes its title from the opening song on the album *Houses of the Holy*, premiered in New York on October 20, 1976, and in London a few days later. Despite being panned by more than a few critics, the movie was a resounding commercial success (grossing $10 million in the United States alone). The soundtrack album, recorded and subsequently mixed (at Electric Lady Studios in New York and Trident Studios in London) by Eddie Kramer, was released on October 22 and would also go down well with a sizable audience, getting to number 1 in the United Kingdom, number 2 in the United States, and number 6 in Japan.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Following Led Zeppelin's second concert in New York, Richard Cole and attorney Steve Weiss deposited $186,700 in a safe-deposit box at the Drake Hotel on Park Avenue. This money, intended for the payment of various wages and expenses, was stolen a few hours later. While the police were carrying out their investigations, the band gave a press conference during which Grant got into a brawl with a photographer and was arrested for assault, earning himself a few hours at the police station. Richard Cole, meanwhile, was considered a suspect and had to take a lie detector test, but neither the money nor the culprit was ever found!

1. IN THE EVENING 2. SOUTH BOUND SAUREZ 3. FOOL IN THE RAIN 4. HOT DOG 5. CAROUSELAMBRA 6. ALL MY LOVE 7. I'M GONNA CRAWL **OUTTAKES :** OZONE BABY / DARLENE / WEARING AND TEARING

IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR



ALBUM IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: August 20, 1979
Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER:
Swan Song SSK 59410

United States: August 15, 1979
Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER:
Swan Song SS 16002

Number 1 (United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and New Zealand); Number 2 (Japan); Number 3 (Australia); Number 5 (Spain); Number 7 (France)

Promo shot of Led Zeppelin taken in 1978 prior to the worldwide release of *In Through the Out Door.*

LED ZEPPELIN'S LAST STATEMENT

A Magick Tour Postponed

The months following the release of *Presence* (April 5, 1976) were taken up mainly with postproduction of the movie *The Song Remains the Same*, which was to have its preview in New York City on October 20, 1976, and the restructuring of Swan Song. The record label closed its London headquarters and moved to Montreux, but most importantly its vice president Danny Goldberg was fired for refusing to organize a Bad Company tour. It was not until November that the four members of Led Zeppelin reconvened to prepare for a new and extended run of concerts in North America scheduled to kick off in Texas on February 27 and 28, 1977 (Fort Worth and Houston). This was to be a record-breaking tour, covering thirty cities and pulling in total audience numbers of more than a million. Furthermore, it was the band's eleventh tour on American soil. As eleven was Aleister Crowley's magic number, Jimmy Page clearly would have taken this as a sign.

Rehearsals took place in London at the E-Zee Hire Studios in November and December 1976 and at Manticore Studios (a former cinema that had been converted by Emerson, Lake & Palmer) in January and February 1977. The equipment, light shows, and special effects were then sent over to Texas, not on the Starship, but on the Caesar's Chariot, a jet belonging to the owners of the hotel and casino Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Even in the rarified world of Led Zeppelin, however, the unexpected could happen, and a few days before the band was due to fly to the United States, Robert Plant came down with tonsillitis, leaving him fatigued and unable to sing. The tour was not canceled but postponed. It was rescheduled to open on April 1 (in Dallas, Texas) and to close on July 24 (in Oakland, California).

When Death Strikes

Extra dates were subsequently added that would extend this eleventh American tour to August 13 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). However, on July 26, as the band was preparing to play the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, Robert Plant received a telephone call from Maureen in England. Karac was suffering from a serious respiratory infection and had been rushed to the hospital. Concern grew. Two hours later the telephone rang again. It was tragic news: at just five years of age, Karac had died in the ambulance that was taking him to the hospital in Kidderminster. Robert Plant was in shock. There was obviously no question of him going onstage. Accompanied by John Bonham, Richard Cole, and the tour manager Dennis Sheehan, he got on the first plane

JOHN PAUL JONES
ROBERT PLANT
JIMMY PAGE
JOHN BONHAM
LED-ZEPPELIN
SWAN SONG

Robert Plant with his wife, Maureen, and their two children, Karac and Carmen, in the Welsh countryside in October 1976. Tragedy was to strike a few months later.

A CATALOG OF TRAGEDIES

The year 1977 would be a particularly painful one for Robert Plant. After losing his son in July, he, along with the rest of the world, was to learn of the death of Elvis Presley on August 16, his idol having passed away at home in Memphis. One year later, on September 7, 1978, in London, it was drummer Keith Moon's turn to bow out.

back to London. The funeral took place a few days later in Birmingham. The absence of Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and Peter Grant, who had been "held up" in the United States, was widely commented upon. Did Led Zeppelin still exist? This was now the least of Robert Plant's worries. "After the death of my son," Plant would later tell Barney Hoskyns, "I received a lot of support from [Bonham], and I went through the mill because the media turned on the whole thing and made it even worse. I had to look after my family and at that time, as we regrouped, I applied to take a job at a Rudolph Steiner training college in Sussex. I wanted to just get out of it—to go away and forget it."[47]

Sections of the media were trying to establish a connection between Karac's mysterious death and the taste for occultism that was attributed to Led Zeppelin, while Robert, Maureen, and their young daughter Carmen, in their grief, were living—or rather surviving—in complete isolation from the world. Yet Jimmy Page was still refusing to talk about Led Zeppelin in the past tense. In October 1977 he held a press conference, not only to quash rumors that the band—and Robert Plant in particular—had fallen victim to some hypothetical curse but also, and most importantly, to talk about the band's future, starting with the possible release of a double live album (of their 1969 Royal Albert Hall concert).

Several months passed. "I went to see Robert a couple of times during that period," recalls Dennis Sheehan. "Part of his life had been destroyed and he was trying to build it back again. Maureen getting pregnant helped that process. It wasn't a replacement for Karac, it certainly wasn't, but it re-established the fact that life has to go on, it can't be all about living in the past. Robert realised that."[2] At the end of spring 1978, with Maureen pregnant again, Robert Plant suddenly emerged from his long period of lethargy and rediscovered his taste for music. He produced the single of a punk band by the name of Dansette Damage, sang in a pub with a local

group called the Turd Burglars and then with Dr Feelgood in a club on Ibiza, and a month later joined Dave Edmunds onstage at a concert in Birmingham. Most importantly, at Peter Grant's initiative, the Led Zeppelin singer met up with Jimmy Page, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham in the very gothic setting of Clearwell Castle in Gloucestershire (previously the stronghold of Bad Company and Deep Purple) in May. He had agreed to take part in new rehearsals, demonstrating to the press that the group was not about to split up. The one condition was that they would not play "Stairway to Heaven"!

Captain Sensible, Rat Scabies, Dave Vanian, and Brian James, the four members of the Damned, one of whose gigs Jimmy Page and Robert Plant attended.

The Album

The aim of the rehearsals at Clearwell Castle was not merely to weld the four members of the group back together after long months of sadness and uncertainty; it was also to prepare for the future, one aspect of which was the recording of a new album. And so, after John Paul Jones and John Bonham had taken part in a session of Paul McCartney's Rockestra (for the album *Back to the Egg*, 1979) at Abbey Road on October 3, 1978, Led Zeppelin began rehearsing the songs for their eighth album, subsequently named *In Through the Out Door*, again at London's E-Zee Hire Studios in October and November.

This studio album was also intended as a riposte to journalists and a whole generation of would-be musicians who wanted to relegate rock music pioneers to the status of dinosaurs on the path to extinction. On both sides of the Atlantic the punk movement was at its height, bringing a return to the energy of the early days of rock 'n' roll and advocating anarchy against a background of economic crisis and a rejection of Western values, with Mohawks, leather S and M clothing, and torn T-shirts. Most if not all the bands connected with the movement held the rock scene that had come before them in contempt. Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols wore a T-shirt that proclaimed "I hate Pink Floyd," while members of the Clash boasted that the mere sight of a Led Zeppelin album made them feel like throwing up. Of course there was a lot of deliberate provocation, but it was nevertheless a sign of the times: under the jibes of the Blank Generation, the likes of the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Yes, and Led Zeppelin could be nothing more than sacred monsters with feet of clay.

Jimmy Page, for his part, felt no particular animosity toward the punk bands. In an interview with Michael Hann for the *Guardian* (July 24, 2015), he revealed that had been perfectly well disposed toward these new groups: "I really enjoyed punk music: I went to hear the Damned, and Robert came along—the two of us went to see the Damned here in London. [...] I liked the Sex Pistols' music, I thought it was superb. I liked it but that didn't mean to say I was going to give up on the way I was going—but you do, you appreciate other music along the way."[112]

What is certain is that in the minds of Led Zeppelin's four members, their eighth album had to be a response to the critics while at the same time questioning themselves. One unmistakable sign was that despite Jimmy Page remaining the sole producer of the album, it was, for the first time ever, John Paul Jones who was really in the driver's seat. He had composed or co-composed six of the seven numbers (the exception being "Hot Dog"), whereas Jimmy Page's name, again for the first time, was absent from two of the credits, those for "All My Love" and "South Bound Saurez." Furthermore, the lion's share of the music, from "In the Evening" to "I'm Gonna Crawl," went to Jones's keyboards, making *In Through the Out Door* the least typically Zeppelinesque album in the quartet's discography and the most resolutely new wave. "We start doing some rehearsals, getting together, and John Paul Jones has got this keyboard made by Yamaha, and it was called the dream machine,"

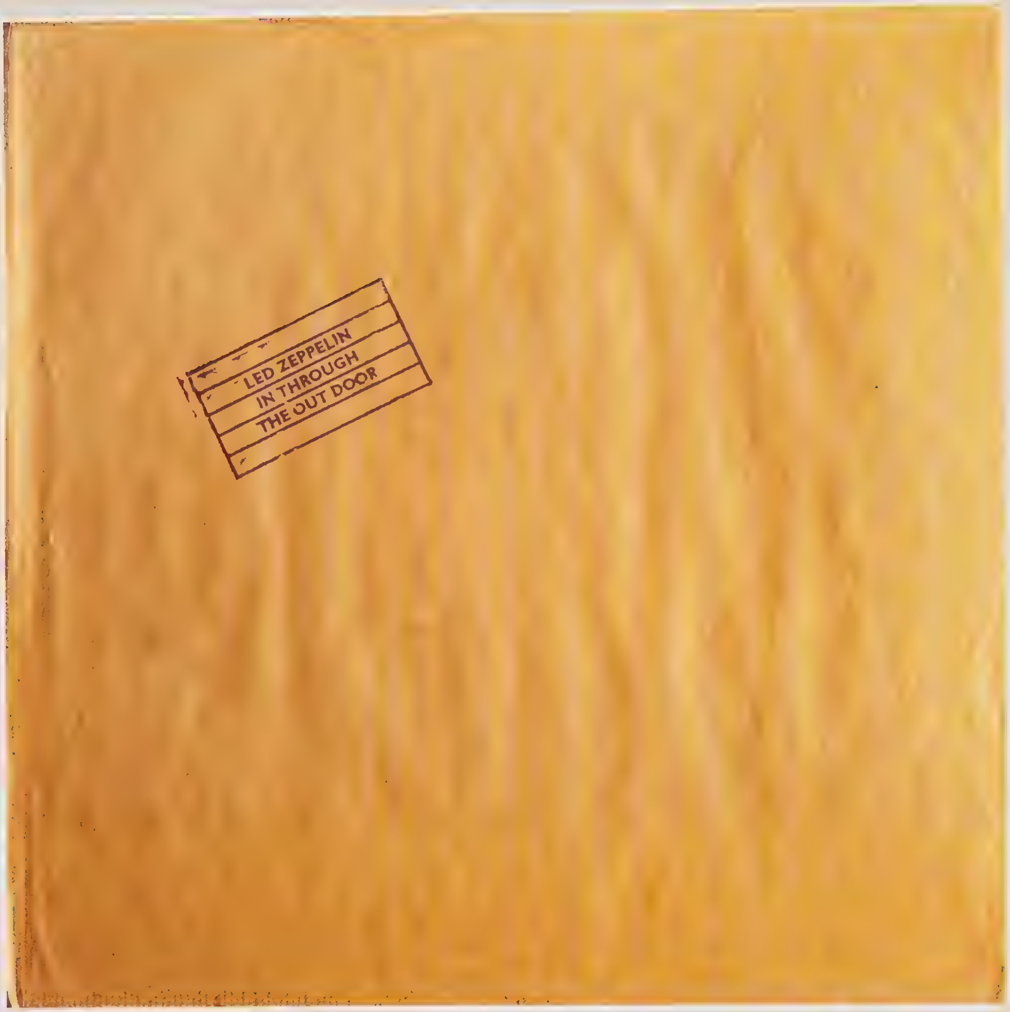
John Paul Jones, the real motor behind *In Through the Out Door.*

On December 26, 27, 28, and 29, 1979, four benefit concerts for the victims of the war in Cambodia, organized by UNICEF, were held at the Hammersmith Odeon in London. Paul McCartney and Wings, Queen, and the Who were among those performing. At the last show, John Bonham, John Paul Jones, and Robert Plant (who had previously sung "Little Sister" with Rockpile), joined Paul McCartney in his all-star group the Rockestra to play the "Rockestra Theme," "Let It Be," and "Lucille."

recalls Jimmy Page. "So you can imagine what it was, if you're gonna call something a dream machine—it was a state-of-the-art keyboard. John Paul Jones had been inspired by this keyboard, I guess—he had complete numbers that he'd written, you know, with verses, choruses, middles and it was fantastic, because Presence had been an electric guitar album. John Paul Jones had this writing renaissance, because he hadn't written whole numbers before and suddenly he had."[112] This was also the very first time Jimmy Page was not Robert Plant's only songwriting partner. "He [John Paul] also started working closely with Robert, which was something that had not happened before,"[4] notes the guitarist.

In Through the Out Door was released on August 15, 1979, in the United States and on August 20 in the United Kingdom, just a few days after the group's two triumphant Knebworth Festival concerts (on the fourth and the eleventh). The album's success was as sensational as it was unhoped for, given that punk was in full and furious swing. The album climbed at lightning speed to number 1 on both the UK and the US charts. In the United States it sold five million copies in a matter of months. (It has since been certified six times Platinum, with sales to date of some six million). It also achieved number 1 in Canada and New Zealand and peaked at number 2 in Japan, number 3 in Australia, number 5 in Spain, and number 7 in France…

The response of the critics was inversely proportional to that of the overwhelming majority of fans. In the *Rolling Stone* of October 18, 1979, Charles M. Young rounded on John Bonham's drumming, which he compared to "watching Clint Eastwood club eight bad guys over the head with a two-by-four while driving a derailed locomotive through their hideout."[113] Robert Plant also came in for criticism. The rock critic judged that "sadly, Bonham's exuberance on *In through the Out Door* is



The brown paper bag in which the album was wrapped. A hint of the Who's *Live at Leeds*.

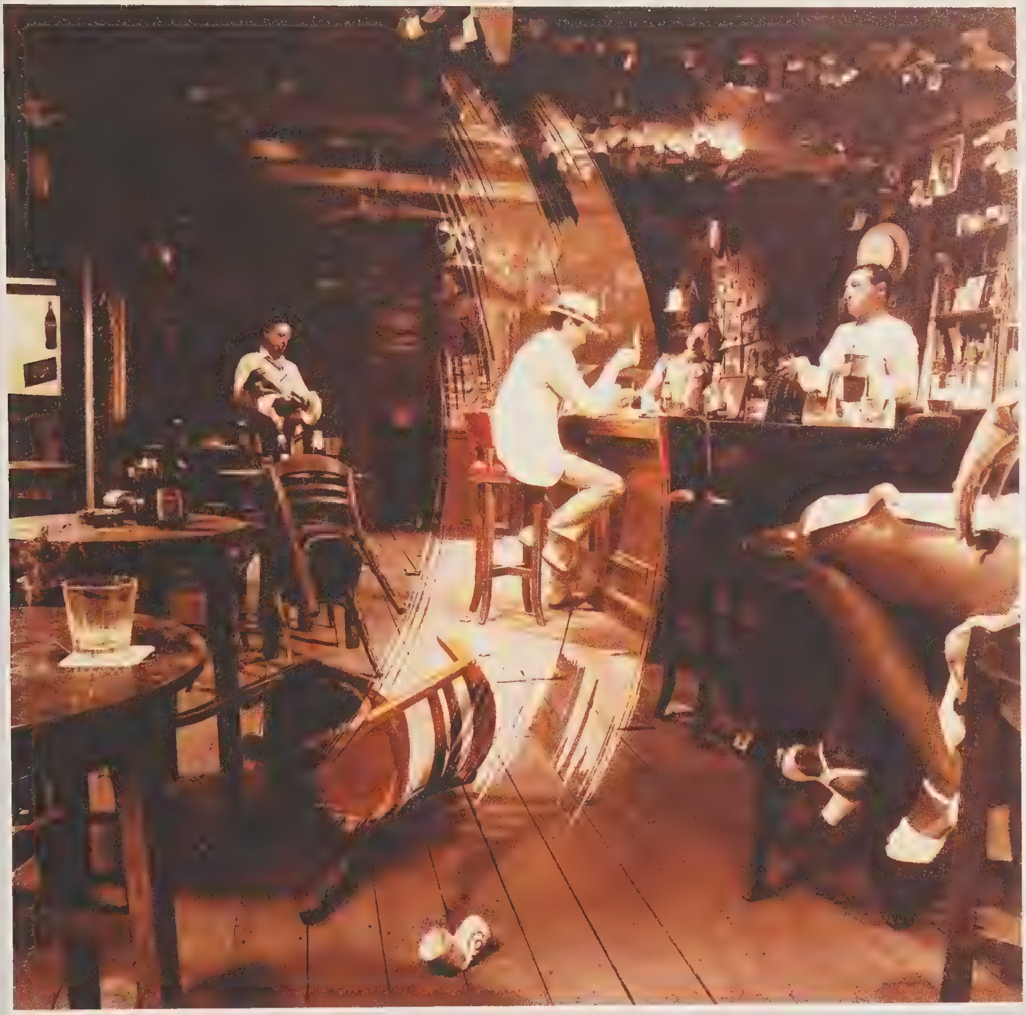
matched only by Robert Plant's appetite for inanity […]. As you might suspect, *In through the Out Door*'s best number is the one in which you can understand the least words. This is 'In the Evening' […]. The only line I was able to understand was 'Oh oh I need zoo love.'"[113] The level of enthusiasm was no higher in the United Kingdom. "The impressionable first play had everyone in the office rolling around laughing, splatting their heads against the wall," wrote Chris Bohn in *Melody Maker*, before continuing, "Zeppelin are totally out of touch."[114] One of the very few critics to offer an opinion if not exactly glowing then at least containing a grain of hope was Nick Kent, who wrote in the *NME*: "There are potential points of departure that deserve following through. The doctor orders a period of intensive activity."[115]

For the first ever time, Jimmy Page would make it known that he did not wholeheartedly approve of the album, or at least of the musical direction that had been taken. Despite his relatively lukewarm approach to the LP, however, he had lost none of his enthusiasm for the group, replying, when questioned about this: "Never. Never. In fact, Bonzo and I had already started discussing plans for a hard-driving rock album after that. We both felt that *In Through the Out Door* was a little soft."[4] Sadly, fate had other plans in store…

The Sleeve

Due to a delay on the part of the sleeve designers—a recurring issue with Led Zeppelin—it was not possible to release *In Through the Out Door* in time for the Knebworth Festival, as Peter Grant and the marketing strategy team at Swan Song Records had initially planned. The visuals for this eighth studio album, following those for *Houses of the Holy* and *Presence*, were once again designed by Hipgnosis.

Inspired by the title, Storm Thorgerson and Aubrey Powell had the idea of showing the view through a window into the interior of a bar. Hence the curved mark in the center of the photograph, giving the impression the window has been wiped clean in order to give a better view of the scene inside. As always, however, the artistic approach taken by Thorgerson and the graphic design-



One of the six versions of the *In Through the Out Door* visuals.

ers at Hipgnosis is more complex than it initially seems. Thus it is not a single scene that the London design studio has staged but six. The location is a sleazy bar Jimmy Page remembered from New Orleans: the Old Absinthe House on Bourbon Street, not far from the Royal Orleans Hotel. More accurately, it is a replica of that bar constructed at Shepperton Studios. A man sitting at the counter can be seen burning a Dear John letter. As he does so, he is being watched by six people: the barkeep, a young blond woman next to the bar, a strong-looking man standing nearby, a laughing African American woman also by the bar, the pianist, and a dark-haired woman standing next to the jukebox.

The sleeve came in six different versions. Version one: the strong-looking man's point of view is shown on the front while the laughing woman observes on the back; only the dark-haired woman is nowhere to be seen. Version two: the front shows the young blond woman's point of view while the person watching on the back is the pianist; between front and back, all the characters can be seen. Version three: on the front is the barkeep's point of view while on the back the brunette woman standing next to the jukebox watches; only three people (in addition to the main character) are visible on the front and back. Version four: the front shows the laughing woman's point of view while the strong-looking man watches on the back; once again it is the brunette who does not appear in this combination. Version five: on the front is the pianist's point of view, and on the back the young blond woman observes; all the characters are visible. Finally, in version six it is the point of view of the brunette woman next to the jukebox on the front and again the barkeep who watches on the back. David Brolan took all the photographs. Richard Manning then sepia-toned the images in order to emphasize the nostalgic, film-noir aspect of the scene.

In addition to the six variants of the sleeve, Peter Grant suggested another, extremely shrewd idea: to conceal the album in a brown paper bag so that buyers would only discover which version of the visuals they had upon removing the album from the bag. The inner sleeve features a black-and-white close-up of the

The four members of ABBA with their manager Stig "Stikkan" Anderson at Polar Studios.

ashtray in which the brokenhearted fellow has incinerated his letter.

The Recording

After rehearsing at E-Zee Hire in London, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham flew off to Stockholm, where they had booked Polar Studios. Their choice had fallen on Polar partly because their tax exile prevented them from recording in the United Kingdom, and partly because they had been solicited by the Swedes themselves, as Jimmy Page explains: "I was contacted by the people at Polar to see if I'd go in with Led Zeppelin because basically they wanted an international group in Polar because you just associated Polar Studios with ABBA and they wanted to make it more international. So if Led Zeppelin went in there, boy oh boy, it's going to be international!"[109] Incentivized by advantageous financial terms, the group therefore found themselves recording in the vast space of Studio A, whose acoustics lacked reverb, a quality important to Jimmy Page, but that he had done without since the previous album (recorded at Musicland Studios in Munich): "They had all the outboard equipment—but the playing area was dry, there were no reflective surfaces to speak about apart from the glass. There were no wooden floors so the whole aspect of ambiance was not there."[109] Clearly this was a problem above all for the drums. Page reveals one of his little production secrets to compensate for this lack of resonance: "To actually recreate the ambiance, for the first time the bass drum's skin comes off!"[109] This was a real event for Bonham, who had always refused to do it in the past, despite it being a normal studio practice for the majority of drummers. This way his Ludwig was able to retain a sound approaching that of the band's previous albums, albeit without the exceptional sonority that had been obtained at Headley Grange. Nevertheless, listening to this record, the overall sound is very different, drier, more "studio," and above all closer to that of the recordings of the day. Instead of the full sound produced by English equipment, it has a

Lennart Östlund, assistant sound engineer on *In Through the Out Door,* behind the console at Polar Studios.

FOXES IN THE HENHOUSE

Robert Plant reportedly claimed on Swedish television that he and Jimmy Page used to unwind at live sex shows after a day of recording. The two members of Led Zeppelin were allegedly accompanied by Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson of ABBA, the four buddies enjoying a drink with a couple frolicking onstage in front of them. However, a spokesperson for the Swedish group was quick to refute the story.

certain typically American brilliance, most likely due to the Harrison mixing console.

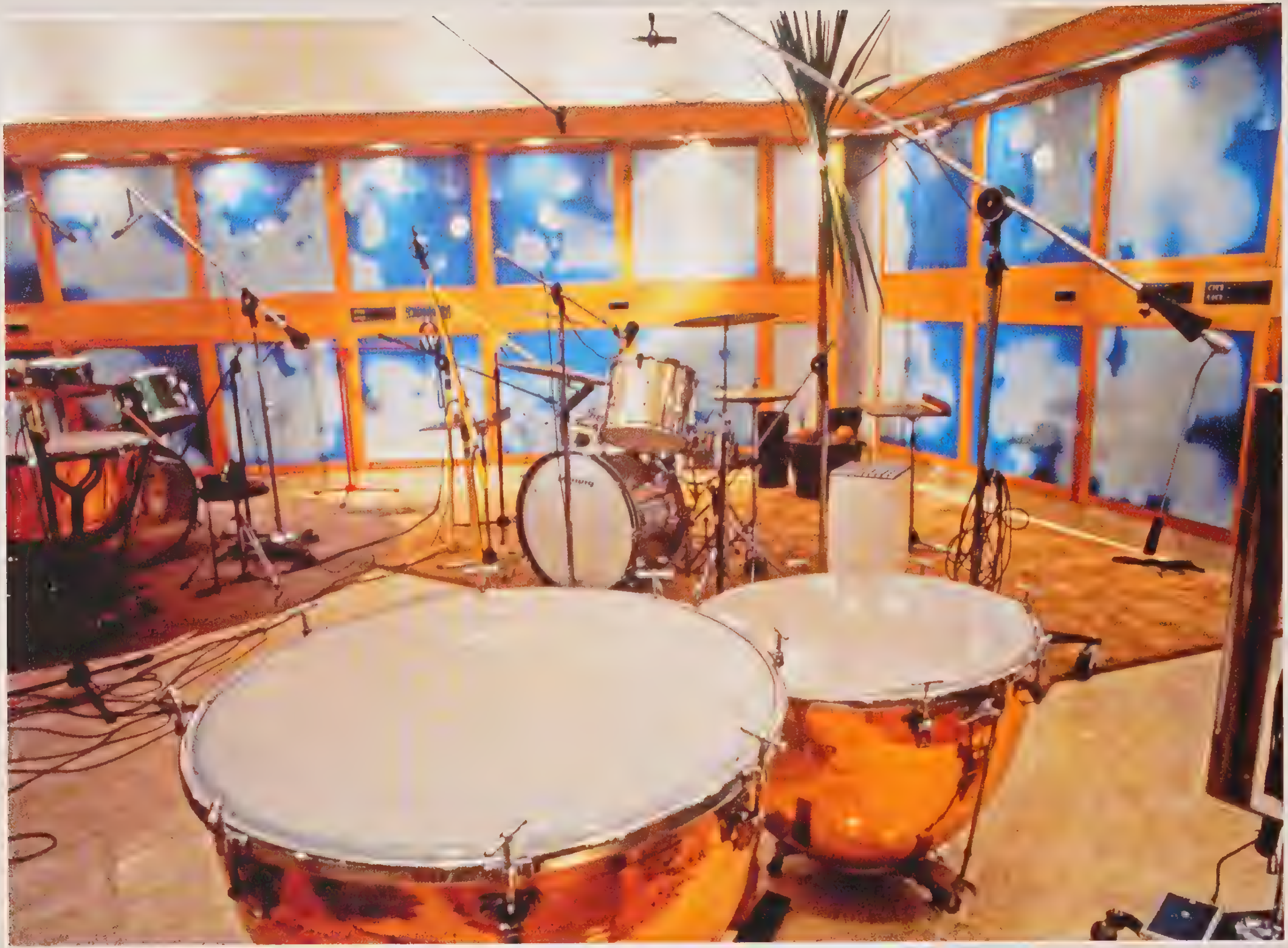
At Polar Studios, the band benefited from cutting-edge technology for the recording of their eighth and, as it turned out, final studio album. But the atmosphere did not really suit the four musicians. As a result, they commuted, working in Stockholm during the week and spending the weekends at home in England (from Friday late afternoon to Monday late morning). Richard Cole has spoken of cold, boring sessions, although Robert Plant retains very different memories: "Normally, a regimental attitude has to be taken in the studio, but with ABBA's studio it was very easy-going and the whole series of rooms beckoned for you to play good stuff and dictated the mood, along with the Swedish beer..."[21]

The four members of Led Zeppelin arrived in the Swedish capital in all likelihood on November 13, 1978. They were in the studio the very next day. "We got rehearsals first and spent a lot of time drinking pints of Pimms waiting for something to happen," joked Jones. "So, Robert and I wrote a few songs and Jimmy [and Bonzo] added stuff to them."[24] In spite of everything, the seven tracks on *In Through the Out Door* were recorded in just three weeks, along with "Ozone Baby," "Darlene," and "Wearing and Tearing," which were put aside before being pulled out of the drawer for *Coda*. This time, however, the musicians were not as united as before, with Page and Bonham regularly turning up late to the studio. Contending with narcotics problems, the guitarist was by no means at the top of his form, and this in part explains his relative lack of leadership. For the first time ever, it was not the guitarist who dominated the sessions, but instead Plant and Jones who more or less took control. In reality, the band was recording from Tuesday to Thursday, and often with more or less nonexistent guitar parts. Jimmy Page preferred to work on the overdubs in between the Swedish sessions, that is to say during his two days in his Plumpton Place studio back in England. As a result his contribution lacks a certain power, the power he had previously obtained from his magical combination of Les Paul and Marshall.

The album was mixed in early 1979, partly at Polar Studios and partly at Plumpton Place.

Technical Details

Founded in 1977 by the pop group ABBA, or more specifically Björn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson, and located in a former 1930s cinema on the ground floor of the Sportpalatset building, Polar Studios officially opened on April 18, 1978. The sound engineer for *In Through the Out Door* was Leif Mases, who was assisted by Lennart Östlund. Studio A, where Led Zeppelin recorded, was equipped with a superb Harrison forty-channel console modified by Leif Mases and his team, a twenty-four-track MCI JH-16 tape machine (soon to be replaced by a JH-24), and Westlake monitors.



Polar Studios. Although Bonham's Ludwig "Stainless Steel" is clearly set up in the studio, his "Green Sparkle" can also be made out on the left.

Jimmy Page remembers the studio being extremely well equipped: "I knew it was state of the art equipment in there and yes it was superb."[109]

The Instruments

Jimmy Page continues to play his trusty Gibson Les Paul "Number One," but also turns to his 1964 Fender Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue, his 1953 Fender Telecaster "Botswana Brown" fitted with a Parsons/White B-Bender, his double-neck Gibson EDS-1275, his Martin D-28 acoustic, a twelve-string acoustic, and a classical guitar with nylon strings (the last two unfortunately unidentified).

Two new effects make their appearance on this album: a Gizmotron and an MXR Blue Box pedal. The first of these, more commonly known as the "Gizmo," is a device installed on the bridge of an electric guitar or bass to enable it to produce sounds resembling those made by a bowed instrument. Two members of the group 10cc, Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, patented it with help from John McConnell, a senior lecturer at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) around 1973. Unfortunately, production of the Gizmo came to a halt in the eighties, although a new version became available in 2016—to the great joy of those with a penchant for curious sounds. The second effect, the MXR Blue Box, is an octave/fuzz pedal that doubles notes two octaves lower. This was popularized by Jimmy Page with his solo on "Fool in the Rain."

John Paul Jones is still playing his 1962 Fender Jazz Bass, the only instrument with the honor of having been used on all the Led Zeppelin albums. It is above all on keyboards, however, that Jones distinguishes himself on this final studio album by the band. He plays a Bösendorfer grand piano and various synthesizers that were part of the studio equipment at Polar, such as the Oberheim TVS-1 Two Voice. (Unfortunately, not all have been identified.) Jones makes most use of the fabulous Yamaha GX-1, one of the biggest analog and polyphonic synthesizers of the day. Jimmy Page remembers: "We're going into rehearsals, and he shows up with this massive theater organ, it was called a

Polar Studios. John Paul Jones's Yamaha GX-1 can be seen to the right of his Yamaha CP 70.

Dream Machine. It was a Yamaha Dream Machine, Stevie Wonder had one too."[110]

Meanwhile, John Bonham seems to have recorded most of the album on his latest acquisition, a Ludwig "Stainless Steel," although his "Green Sparkle" was also present in the studio. In addition to his work on the drum kit, he also plays numerous percussion parts, the most readily identifiable being Ludwig timbales, orchestral timpani, the agogo, a shaker, and the maracas. He also seems to have played the marimba.

John Bonham's Farewell

Would the critics have been so harsh had they known that *In Through the Out Door* would be Led Zeppelin's last studio album? It is difficult to know. Eight months after the Knebworth Festival and the release of the album, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham were rehearsing—first in London, at the Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park and the New Victoria Theatre, and then at Shepperton Studios in Middlesex—for a new tour. This time Peter Grant bestowed the honor of receiving a Led Zeppelin tour on continental Europe. Following the cancellation of ten or so shows between May 22 and June 14, the "Over Europe Tour" kicked off on June 17, 1980, in Dortmund, West Germany. This was followed by Cologne, Brussels, Rotterdam, Bremen, Hanover, Vienna, Nuremberg, Zurich, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Munich, and finally West Berlin on July 7.

These European dates should have been followed in October and November by Canada and the United States, but the West Berlin show turned out to be Led Zeppelin's last ever. On September 25, John Bonham joined the long list of rock stars who had fallen victim to their own excesses. The rehearsals for the next American tour had begun at Bray Studios in Berkshire. On the way there, early in the day, Bonham asked his driver and assistant Rex King to stop off at a pub, where he drank four quadruple vodkas and orange accompanied by two ham rolls. He continued to drink during rehearsals and in the evening at the Old Mill House, the Windsor manor Jimmy Page had recently bought from the actor Michael Caine. In other words he did not stop

Above: John Bonham onstage during the 1977 American tour. An outstanding drummer at the peak of his powers.

Below: John Bonham's tombstone in the cemetery of Rushock Parish Church in Worcestershire.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

On July 23, 1977, Led Zeppelin gave the first of their two concerts in Oakland, California. After the show, a fight broke out between Peter Grant, John Bonham, Richard Cole, and John Bindon (the group's bodyguard) on one side and Jim Matzorkis, a member of concert promoter Bill Graham's security team, on the other. The cause was that Matzorkis had allegedly slapped an eleven-year-old boy. Unfortunately that boy had turned out to be Grant's son Warren. Matzorkis was violently beaten and had to be taken to the hospital. Upon arriving in New Orleans on July 25, Grant, Bonham, and Bindon were arrested for assault and were released after each put up $250 bail. Led Zeppelin would never play the United States again.

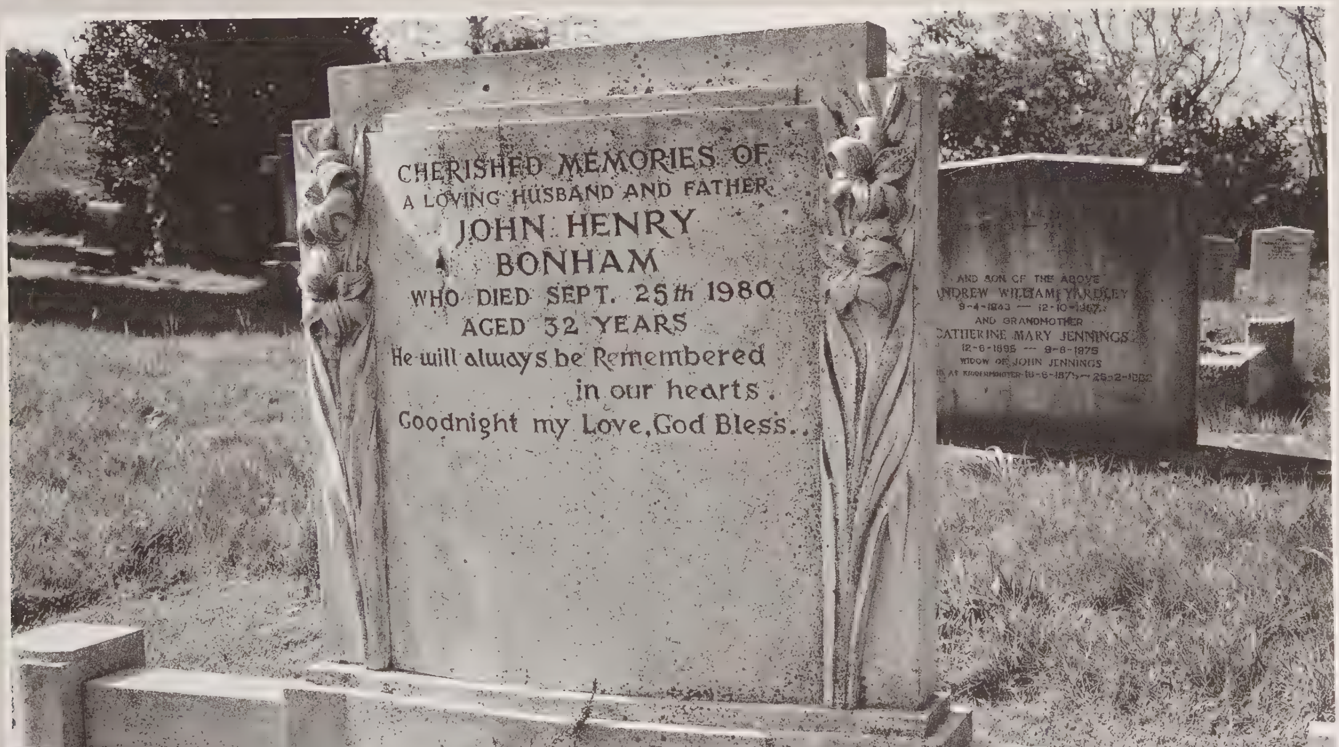
drinking until he collapsed on a sofa hours later. Rick Hobbs, Page's assistant, carried him to bed. Several hours later, Robert Plant's vocal technician, Benji Lefevre, entered the room followed by John Paul Jones to find Bonham completely motionless with no sound of breathing. Gripped by fear, they felt him…no reaction. An ambulance was called but it was too late: John Bonham was dead—at thirty-two years of age. "I remember coming back down the stairs and saying to Jimmy and Robert, 'Don't go up—it's all over,'" recalls Lefevre. "That's all I said. I immediately phoned Peter. Then, the first concern was to get to Pat Bonham before she heard about it through any other source. So Robert and I got in the car and drove at a million miles an hour up to the Midlands."

The dreadful news inevitably made the newspaper headlines, and one magazine would even claim that black smoke had been seen rising from the chimney of the Old Mill House. On October 7, the coroner gave a verdict of accidental death, John Bonham having choked on his own vomit during his sleep after consuming large quantities of alcohol. The funeral took place three days later at Rushock Parish Church in Worcestershire, not far from the drummer's farm. Some three hundred mourners turned out to support Pat Bonham and her son Jason in their ordeal—in addition to Peter Grant, the other three members of the band, and many musicians.

While the rock world was mourning its legendary drummer, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones decided to permanently ground the Zeppelin. A meeting was held with Peter Grant at the Savoy Hotel in London, and the breakup of the band was officially announced by Swan Song Records on December 4, 1980, with the following statement: "We wish it to be known that the loss of our dear friend and the deep sense of undivided harmony felt by ourselves and our manager have led us to decide that we could not continue as we were."[116] This, then, was the end of the journey…

Much later, Robert Plant recalls driving with Bonzo to what would turn out to be their final rehearsal that sad September day in 1980. Plant's drummer friend was not on good shape: "On the very last day of his life, as we drove to the rehearsal, he was not quite as happy as he could be. He said, 'I've had it with playing drums. Everybody plays better than me.' We were driving in the car and he pulled off the sun visor and threw it out the window as he was talking. He said, 'I'll tell you what, when we get to the rehearsal, you play the drums and I'll sing.' And that was our last rehearsal."[36]

In a 1977 interview, Jimmy Page, who would struggle to get over the death of John Bonham, had uttered a phrase that all by itself sums up the tsunami provoked by the death of John Bonham: "It would be a criminal act to break up this band."[3] Clearly he could not have imagined such a brutal and irrevocable end.


CHERISHED MEMORIES OF
A LOVING HUSBAND AND FATHER
JOHN HENRY
BONHAM
WHO DIED SEPT. 25th 1980
AGED 32 YEARS
He will always be Remembered
in our hearts.
Goodnight my Love, God Bless.
AND SON OF THE ABOVE
ANDREW WILLIAM YARDLEY
AND GRANDMOTHER
CATHERINE MARY JENNINGS
WIDOW OF JOHN JENNINGS

John Bonham, an extraordinary drummer whose loss was deeply felt, demonstrating that he was absolutely unique.

IN THE EVENING

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:53

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars, bow (?)
John Paul Jones: bass, keyboard
John Bonham: drums, timpani
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978
Mixing
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

Genesis

In Through the Out Door opens with a tangle of electric guitar. Jimmy Page orchestrated the striking effects using his Gizmotron, a device that alters the sound of—in this case—a guitar in order to give the impression that it could be produced by a bowed instrument such as a violin or cello. A new musical universe for the new album, perhaps. Except that "In the Evening" calls to mind "Main Title," that riot of guitars that Jimmy Page had recorded for the soundtrack of the Kenneth Anger movie *Lucifer Rising* (a soundtrack not used in the end, as the director chose a score by Bobby Beausoleil instead).

Robert Plant's voice is drowned out by the production, although it is possible to work out that the protagonist has a score to settle with the so-called weaker sex. When the evening comes, he claims to be looking for a woman. Not just any woman, but one who won't take him for a fool. He needs love, but not at any price. The key phrase in the second verse seems to be: *So don't you let her get under your skin, it's only bad luck and trouble*. After this, the message is no less clear: you have to take responsibility for yourself at all times. This way, good fortune will trump pain. On the one hand loneliness *at the bottom*; on the other, dizziness *at the top. But when you're standing in the middle, ain't no way you're gonna stop*, sings Robert Plant by way of a conclusion (and a moral!).

The opening song on *In Through the Out Door* was given an airing at the first of Led Zeppelin's two Copenhagen concerts in 1979 (on July 23), a month before the release of the album. The band then performed it at their two Knebworth Festival shows and again during their final tour of continental Europe.

Production

Led Zeppelin's final studio album opens with an intro almost a minute long that fades in gradually, just like that of "Achilles Last Stand" on their previous album,

Jimmy Page at Knebworth in 1979 delivering a breathtaking version of "In the Evening" on his 1964 Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue.

Presence. A drone, played by Jimmy Page in all probability on his 1964 Fender Stratocaster Lake Placid Blue, creates a meditative atmosphere. To produce this sonority resembling a tambura, Page is probably using his violin bow, as he had previously on "In the Light" on *Physical Graffiti*. However, he may equally have produced the sound using the Gizmotron (which Kevin Godley and Lol Creme of 10cc had apparently lent him for the occasion), a curious device positioned on the bridge of his guitar, enabling him to play an oriental-style tune drenched in reasonably generous reverb and delay.

Audible throughout the intro is a percussion instrument colored by strong phasing. This is John Bonham playing his timpani (for example at 0:07 and 0:35). The

Keith Emerson (of Emerson Lake & Palmer). It was to the wizard of prog-rock keyboard that John Paul Jones relinquished his Yamaha GX-1.

timps occupy a recessed position in the mix and pan around the stereo—they would only realize their full potential live onstage (listen to the Knebworth Festival recording from August 1979). At 0:55, Robert Plant's vocal suddenly emerges, distorted by various effects, probably including a very short delay and a harmonizer. After the singer's opening phrase, the group as a whole makes an explosive entrance in out-and-out rock style, shattering the haunting atmosphere of the intro. Bonzo pounds his Ludwig "Stainless Steel" with considerable force, for the first time in his career adopting a simple, stripped-down, and linear style every bit as effective as his previous drum work. The sound may not be on a par with that on the legendary albums of the past, but thanks to the removal of the front skin of his kick drum, Bonham succeeds in sounding highly convincing, albeit with a color far closer to that of the productions of the day. John Paul Jones supports him on his Jazz Bass with the same intensity as always, but it is above all on his new keyboard, the Yamaha GX-1, the famous "Dream Machine," that he distinguishes himself, producing some very good string pads. The sound is rich, silky, and, within this rock context, perfectly integrated with that of the guitars.

In 2008, Benny Andersson of ABBA would reveal that due to its astronomical cost (in the region of $50,000), there were probably no more than three musicians in possession of such an instrument at the time: "Stevie Wonder had one. John Paul Jones had one. And I had one."[117] For the record, the Swedish keyboard player was to use the Led Zeppelin bassist's strings program in a number of ABBA songs. "And I still use it all the time,"[117] he adds.

Above all, however, "In the Evening" owes its dazzle to Jimmy Page's guitar playing. Page lays down a very good riff on his 1964 Stratocaster. This is doubled to give it a fuller sound. Like Keith Richards, Page was continually looking for the ultimate riff, and although the careers of both have been strewn with immortal licks, the two guitarists have never ceased their quest. This is no less the case with "In the Evening," the Led Zeppelin guitarist using his Fender to come up with yet another rock 'n' roll variant, one both hard-hitting and refreshingly new. He uses his whammy bar at the end of the riff, and his Stratocaster has a far brighter sound than on any of the band's previous albums. It is also colored (or at least seems to be) by light phasing and generous reverb.

Robert Plant's lead vocal poses a problem. There is nothing wrong with his performance. On the contrary, he has rediscovered a rock voice that had at times been absent from *Presence*. The problem is the effects that have been applied to his voice, making it difficult to understand his words and, even worse, congealing the recording in a sound characteristic of the late seventies and even more so the eighties, the sound of technology used to excess, yielding a cold and impersonal result. This is a shame. A comparison between the album and the live versions of the song reveals the difference.

After three verses and three refrains, Jimmy Page embarks on a very good solo that he launches with a percussive effect produced on his guitar with the whammy bar (at 3:45, recorded on a separate track). He uses this effect again a little later (4:02). Page's performance is edgy and overtly rock, and he can be sensed taking pleasure in his playing. At the end of his solo, the track moves into a jazz-rock-like section with a soothing, mellow feel in which Bonham works his ride cymbal (from 4:23). Page takes another solo, his guitar (distorted and with considerable sustain) sounding more like his Les Paul than his Strat. His phrases are light and floating, recalling the playing of Carlos Santana. He also adds an arpeggiated rhythm guitar (on the left) colored by very present flanging. John Paul Jones, in addition to a very good melodic bass line in which he explores the upper

reaches of his fingerboard, reinforces Page's arpeggios with flute-like sounds (more audible on the companion disc that accompanies the deluxe edition of the album) and pads on his GX-1.

This is followed by a final verse (from 4:58), after which Robert Plant launches into the last refrain of the song, accompanied by Jimmy Page with distorted, reverb-drenched phrases on the guitar. The guitarist plays another solo on his Stratocaster in the outro, which ends with a fade-out.

"In the Evening" is a good rock track comprising various different moods, and opens *In Through the Out Door* in considerable style. The Polar Studios sound is excellent despite not exactly corresponding to the group's characteristic color. But what other choice did the four members of Led Zeppelin have, caught as they were between the tidal wave of punk and the advent of the digital sounds of the eighties?

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

John Paul Jones's personal Yamaha GX-1, one of the first truly polyphonic synthesizers, was to have at least two other famous owners. In the mid-eighties Jones passed it on to the talented Keith Emerson, from whom the movie score composer Hans Zimmer (*Gladiator, Inception, Interstellar*) subsequently acquired it. To fully appreciate the fabulous string sound of this outstanding synthesizer, there is no better song to listen to than Stevie Wonder's "Village Ghetto Land" on *Songs in the Key of Life* (1976).

Robert Plant and John Paul Jones (the clean face of the band?), who were responsible for this jaunt across the Rio Grande rooted in New Orleans rhythm 'n' blues.

SOUTH BOUND SAUREZ

John Paul Jones, Robert Plant / 4:12

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, piano
John Bonham: drums
Unidentified Musicians: backing vocals
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978
Mixing
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"Saurez" or "Suarez"? Jimmy Page corrected the title of the song to "South Bound Suarez" on his website but not on the rerelease of the album *In Through the Out Door,* which he supervised in 2015.

Genesis

"South Bound Saurez" is one of the least Zeppelinesque numbers in the quartet's entire catalog. And it did not exactly make an everlasting impression on the fans. The atmosphere of the song could have influenced the graphic designers at Hipgnosis in developing a concept for the *In Through the Out Door* cover. Initially called "South Bound Piano," the song is a tribute to the kind of rhythm 'n' blues that has been performed in the sleazy nightclubs of New Orleans for many decades. A heavily Elton John–influenced tribute to the New Orleans tradition, one might add…

"South Bound Saurez" was a fruit of the newfound partnership between John Paul Jones and Robert Plant, with Jimmy Page's role limited to that of guitarist.

Plant's lyrics, delivered over a supercharged piano blues rhythm, lend themselves to a number of different interpretations. Might the Led Zeppelin singer be evoking a hot and sultry night on the other side of the Rio Grande…? "South Bound" is certainly in keeping with this hypothesis, and assuming *Saurez* is a typo for *Suarez*, the title could perhaps refer to Ciudad Juárez, the Mexican city on the opposite side of the Río Bravo (the Spanish name for the Rio Grande) from El Paso in Texas. Alternatively, *saurez* has been interpreted as Spanish for *party*. The only certainty is that the song's heroine has exactly what it takes to feed the fantasies of all who gaze on her. She is told: *You walk it good* and *you talk the sweet talk*. In short, she is a woman with whom it is possible to have a good time before she sends one crashing back down to the ground. *Ooh, now, baby, when you move it makes me really feel so good; I'm so glad…*Could the song simply be about a dance? Or might Robert Plant have been inspired by seeing Silvana Rosa Suárez Clarence win the 1978 Miss World contest (held at the Royal Albert Hall in London) on television…?

One way or the other, Led Zeppelin never performed "South Bound Saurez" live.

Jimmy Page and John Bonham. The dark and mysterious face of Led Zeppelin?

Production

This was the first time a Led Zeppelin number had been credited to Jones and Plant with no Page. "All My Love," on the same album, is another example. It is a credit worth drawing attention to because it says something about the state of mind within the band at that time. "There were two distinct camps by then," says John Paul Jones, "and we were in the relatively clean one."[118] The bassist is clearly alluding to Page's drug problem and Bonham's alcoholism. Given the lack of direction from the guitarist, "South Bound Saurez" answered a need on the part of the band to fill the tracks on its new album.

"South Bound Saurez" is a somewhat edgy boogie that opens with solo acoustic piano from Jones. He works the keyboard with impressive conviction and regularity, his fingers hammering out the frenetic sixteenth notes that persist all the way to the end of the song. So spirited is the rhythm that one might be forgiven for suspecting his part has been sequenced. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the track progressively speeds up, ending at a faster tempo than at the beginning...The sound is that of the Polar Studios Bösendorfer, with no special modification other than equalization during the mixing process. Contrary to what some have claimed, the piano's hammers have not been doctored with thumbtacks.

The rest of the band joins Jones after two bars, Bonham launching the rhythm part with a rap on the snare drum. Bonzo's drumming is pretty heavy, with prominent use of the bass drum, a remarkable swing in the hi-hat, and reasonably discreet use of the snare drum. He generates a hard-rock-style boogie with a strongly felt groove. Jones's bass emphasizes the sixteenth notes on the piano while sticking to the main notes of the harmony. Jimmy Page plays a rhythmic figure on the guitar, most probably his 1953 Telecaster "Botswana Brown" (on the left).

Robert Plant, who gives the impression of being in good form, launches into the first verse in a rock timbre, harmonizing with himself on every other line. A short delay resembling a slapback echo has been applied to his voice, accentuating the fifties feel of the track. Plant also doubles himself in places in the refrains, and delivers his lines with an entirely fitting humor. Jimmy Page supports him with a counterpoint played on a distorted guitar subject to reasonably strong reverb. After the second refrain, the guitarist plays a solo on his Telecaster (from 1:37). Many observers have judged this to be muddled and full of wrong notes (listen between 1:47 and 1:50), but this is not really true; it is simply a case of

Page looking to move off the beaten track by incorporating dissonance into his playing, as he often has in the past (listen to "Dancing Days"). It may not be the best solo he has ever recorded with some rather approximate timing in places, but all in all it does the job and dynamizes the track to good effect.

Following a final verse and refrain, the track concludes with an outro that fades out from 3:17. John Paul Jones overdubs a second piano part that starts off as a purely rhythmic accompaniment before launching into boogie-style flourishes of which Ian Stewart would have been proud. Jimmy Page goes one better with his guitar licks, and backing vocals also enter the picture with some not entirely convincing *sha la las* (from 3:32) to which everyone except Plant seems to have contributed.

What can be said of "South Bound Saurez" other than that it falls some way short of the enormous firepower we have come to expect from Led Zeppelin? Although respectable enough, it is atypical of the band's repertoire, instead calling to mind Elton John or even Slade.

FOOL IN THE RAIN

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 6:10

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars, acoustic guitars (six- and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass, piano, synthesizer (?)
John Bonham: drums, timbales, agogo, marimba (?)
Unidentified Musicians: maracas, shaker, guiro, whistle
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978
Mixing
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The whistle that can be heard in the samba section of "Fool in the Rain" was reportedly blown by John Paul Jones himself. Jones even claimed to have used a Jamaican whistle. However, Deborah Bonham, Bonzo's younger sister, revealed in 2012 that it was their brother Mick (who died in 2000), who had done the whistling.

Genesis

After what was, in all probability, a musical stopover in Mexico with "South Bound Saurez," Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham continue their musical journey to South America with "Fool in the Rain." And because the song unfolds to samba and/or bamba rhythms, it is hard to recognize the Led Zeppelin of "Whole Lotta Love," "Stairway to Heaven," and "Kashmir."

"Fool in the Rain" came into being around the June 1978 soccer World Cup in Argentina, which clearly explains a great deal, because the whole of Europe was awash in Latin American rhythms. "On 'Fool in the Rain,'" explains Jimmy Page, "John Paul Jones had the opportunity to play those keyboards and I was able to place a number of acoustic guitars and an intense electric solo that came after that samba-like section…A samba, yes…With plenty of percussion overdubs."[119]

"Fool in the Rain" tells the oh-so-recurrent story of a rejected lover. This particular male protagonist is in love with a woman with a light in her eye *that keeps shining like a star that can't wait for night*. But this light has blinded her admirer: *You said you would always be true*. Promises, as we know, bind only those who listen to them…The unfortunate soul finds himself waiting in the rain on a street corner for his loved one, who will never come. In the end he just walks away. There is a twist at the end of the song, however, when we learn that the protagonist is *just a fool waiting on the wrong block*. After the Beatles' fool on the hill, Led Zeppelin gives us the fool in the rain…

"Fool in the Rain" was the A-side of the only single to be taken from *In Through the Out Door* (the B-side being "Hot Dog"). This was released in various countries including the United States and Canada (on December 7, 1979), where it rose to numbers 21 and 12 respectively on the charts. The seven-inch was also sold in West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands,

"Fool in the Rain," another song in which John Bonham reveals himself to be an eclectic and unrivaled drummer.

Italy, and Japan. "Fool in the Rain" was never performed live by Led Zeppelin as it was impossible for John Paul Jones to simultaneously take care of bass and piano—two instruments that are both indispensable to this number and reasonably complicated to play—onstage.

Production

First and foremost, "Fool in the Rain" is a showcase for the brilliant talent of John Bonham. It is a shame this exceptional musician has been pigeonholed as a hard-rock drummer, because it is clear, listening to this track, that he was so much more. Bonham was a jack-of-all-trades,

COVER

The Mexican alternative rock band Maná recorded a version of "Fool in the Rain" for the album *Encomium: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin* (1995). Moreover this is the only official cover of a Led Zeppelin song in the Spanish language.

COVER

In 2007, "Fool in the Rain" was also covered by Vanilla Fudge, Led Zeppelin's 1969 touring companions. The Americans paid their own tribute to the four Englishmen by releasing an album of covers mischievously named *Out Through the In Door*.

capable of accompanying and transcending any musical genre. "Fool in the Rain" is Bonzo in the land of swing and samba. His drumming is a version of the famous "Purdie Shuffle" created by the extraordinary Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, a legendary funk drummer who played with the greatest, from James Brown to Aretha Franklin, from Miles Davis to Steely Dan (to mention just a few). Purdie and Bonham shared two of their major influences: Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich.

However, "Fool in the Rain" also exemplifies the incredible versatility of John Paul Jones, who delivers absolutely superb piano and bass guitar parts. The track is based mainly on a Latin American sequence played on the Polar Studios' acoustic piano, a Bösendorfer grand. Jones underlines this sequence on his Jazz Bass, while Jimmy Page also confines himself to doubling the piano on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" (right-hand channel). Meanwhile, Robert Plant delivers a very good lead vocal based on a lighthearted, radiant interpretation of the lyrics. The only slight drawback is that he occasionally lacks accuracy in the intonation of his held notes, which would have benefited from doubling in order to lend them a greater substance and assurance (for example at 0:44).

In the fourth verse, Bonzo varies his drumming by bringing the bell of one of his cymbals into play, thereby accentuating the groove a little more (from 1:13). He is actually marking a variation in the piano pattern, which is also supported by the bass, the Gibson Les Paul, and what sounds like a twelve-string acoustic (unfortunately not identified). It is also possible that the twelve-string is being doubled by a harpsichord sound deriving from Jones's Yamaha GX-1, so prominent are the mid-range frequencies.

After two more verses, the track tips over into what is a very unusual musical style for this outfit: an authentic-sounding samba (from 2:24). This is announced by a whistle and the piano, on which, for about ten seconds, Jones plays a typical samba pattern before a highly impressive wave of rhythm crashes in—and this from a band known hitherto for its hard-rock sound tinged with the folk music of the British Isles! This brings home the dominant influence of John Paul Jones, an eclectic musician better versed in jazz and classical music than his bandmates. However, Jimmy Page would reveal that he too shared a love of samba, as indeed did Bonzo. Page's interest goes back to the early seventies, when the guitarist used to watch the samba schools do their thing before soccer matches. "I was thoroughly fascinated," he explains, "simply by watching it on television…Had I seen them in real life, I think I'd have gone crazy."[119] For more than a minute the band plunges into a frantic Latin rhythm, the lion's share of which is taken by various percussion instruments: whistle, maracas, shaker, agogo, guiro, and timbales among the more readily identifiable. Bonham lays down a locomotive-like groove on his Ludwig, carrying his bandmates along in his wake. Jones's bass is somewhat reminiscent of Jaco Pastorius, the marimba (played by Bonham?) accentuates the exotic color of the musical arrangement, and Page seems to add a rhythm guitar part on his Gibson. A second marimba part comes in around 3:26, this time presumably produced on the GX-1. Meanwhile, Plant launches into a lead vocal that gives the impression of having been completely improvised. The four members of Led Zeppelin are in stunning form, and although their remarkable incursion into this particular musical genre may come as a surprise, there can be no denying their exceptional talent.

The band then returns to the main motif of the song, and Jimmy Page delivers a surprising solo on his Les

Bernard Purdie, funk drummer, inventor of the famous "Purdie Shuffle," and an inspiration for John Bonham and others.

Paul from 3:51. "I had a very precise idea of what I wanted to do after this passage in which we return to the main riff," he explains: "[a] solo using an Octivider, something on the lyrical side…It sounds good on the companion disc."[119] The Octivider that Page is talking about is an effects pedal that doubles the notes played one or more octaves lower. The specific device in question here is a MXR Blue Box, which lowers notes by two octaves while simultaneously distorting them.

As for Page's actual playing, it differs considerably from his usual style. He blends melodic phrases and licks executed at great speed, creating, along with the doubling an octave lower, an impression of notes that crawl around the harmony. "I employed a sound that made people go, 'What the hell was that?'"[120] the guitarist explains. When the album was released, more than a few fans rushed out to buy themselves one of these magic boxes.

Over the next two verses, Page accompanies the lead vocal with a counterpoint played using his effects pedal still, but now with the addition of an acoustic six-string (the Martin D-28?) on which he plays a new bamba-like motif that is doubled by Jones's excellent bass and piano (from 5:24). The track finally ends with an outro that comes to a sudden stop.

For some listeners, "Fool in the Rain" is one of the pinnacles of *In Through the Out Door*; for others it is an aberration that even Jimmy Page could not bring himself to mention without obvious embarrassment. It is certainly true that the original spirit of the group is not easy to recognize in this track, but Led Zeppelin was a unique group, one that by constantly questioning itself.

HOT DOG

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:18

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, piano
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978
Mixing
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

This song was dedicated to the firm Showco, based in Dallas, Texas, which provided sound systems for the band's concerts. In addition to Led Zeppelin, some of the biggest names in rock music benefited from Showco's technology and know-how, from the Rolling Stones to Eric Clapton, from Genesis to the Beach Boys.

Genesis

"Hot Dog" came into existence during the London rehearsals held by the band before they flew out to Stockholm. With this number credited to Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, Led Zeppelin continue to surprise and bewilder their public. Here, the pioneering band of heavy rock and, in a certain sense, prog rock, takes a distinct step backward by declaring their love of rockabilly and Texan music in general, taking in both Bob Wills's western swing and Buddy Holly's rock 'n' roll. The lyrics also refer directly to the Lone Star State. While John Paul Jones works his keyboard with all the determination of a honky-tonk pianist, Robert Plant recounts the misadventures of a lover who has lost his girl. The young woman has taken the *Greyhound at the general store* despite having assured her lover that *no other love could be so strong*. What is more, *now she took my heart, she took my keys*. As a result, the romantic concludes: *I'll never go to Texas anymore*. He then delves into his past and into this affair of the heart that began when the two of them were aged seventeen, remembering, among other things, *our love, our plot, our pickup truck*. The problem, we learn, is that *she was after something more*. There is a delightfully tongue-in-cheek allusion in the line *I never did quite understand all that talk about rockin' bands*. We are presumably to understand that, to the abandoned lover's great dismay, rock stars have lured the protagonist's girl away. Moreover, this song may well be based on a real-life experience. The female character could be modeled on Audrey Hamilton, a groupie with whom Robert Plant had had a fling during the 1977 American tour.

Selected as the B-side of the single "Fool in the Rain," "Hot Dog" was first performed live in Copenhagen on July 23, 1979, then at Knebworth in August, and again during the European tour in June and July 1980. Footage from Knebworth would provide the basis for a promo clip.

Robert Plant and John Paul Jones with Peter Grant at Knebworth in 1979. Footage from the festival was used as a promo for "Hot Dog."

Production

After a count-in from Jimmy Page, the track kicks off with a country-rock intro played in a kind of Nashville chicken pickin' style. The guitar sound is reminiscent of the theme music of the US television series *Green Acres* (broadcast on CBS between 1965 and 1971), composed by Vic Mizzy. Page is playing his 1953 Fender Telecaster "Botswana Brown" fitted with a Parsons/White B-Bender. The sound is distorted, on the dull side, colored by a slight delay, and somewhat lacking in character. Before long the guitarist is joined by his two fellow instrumentalists, who support him with a rockabilly rhythm, John Paul Jones's honky-tonk piano literally setting the track on fire. Although not infrequently praised for his abilities as a multi-instrumentalist, it is worth underlining once again here the quality of Jones's playing on the Polar Studios' Bösendorfer. He may not be Jerry Lee Lewis or Floyd Cramer, but his performance is excellent and fulfills its role perfectly. Jones also plays bass, producing a basic but solid and efficient line on his Fender Jazz Bass. In addition to his chicken pickin' guitar (on the right), Jimmy Page also records a second guitar part, a rhythmic strum that is heavily distorted and reasonably recessed in the mix (in the center). On the drums, meanwhile, John Bonham comes up with a light, skipping rhythm in keeping with the rockabilly style, albeit with less of a groove than usual.

When Robert Plant joins in, the influence of Elvis Presley is immediately apparent, not in his timbre, but in the rhythm he gives his words (from 0:42). Furthermore, an entirely fitting slapback echo has been applied to his voice. The Led Zeppelin singer delivers a very good

Jimmy Page and his 1953 Fender Telecaster Botswana Brown at Knebworth in 1980.

performance that is dynamic and fresh sounding. He harmonizes with himself on the refrains, accentuating the country-rock feel of the track, and in this is supported by Bonzo's ride cymbal (for example from 1:16). The drummer also marks the end of each refrain with a rap on the metal rim of his snare drum, an effect characteristic of the genre.

After the third verse, Jimmy Page launches into a solo on his Telecaster and B-Bender. It has to be said that this is not his best performance. The sound is lackluster, he's not particularly convincing as a chicken picker, his licks lack inspiration, and his timing is none too rigorous (listen between 2:14 and 2:17). Moreover, at 2:05 an unfortunate dropout occurs, with the notes preceding the point of insertion being cut. A better sense of this can be gained by listening to the version on the companion disc of the deluxe edition: the solo differs distinctly at this precise point, with no interruption in the sequence of notes.

In the final verse (from 2:38), John Paul Jones adds what could be a second piano part, the sound resembling that of a tack piano (that is to say with thumbtacks inserted into its hammers in order to make it sound like a honky-tonk piano). Some commentators have identified this second instrument as an Autoharp, though not conclusively.

The song ends with a recapitulation of the phrase Jimmy Page plays in the intro, this time accompanied by the Bonham-Jones rhythm duo.

Although credited to Page and Plant, who were responsible for writing Led Zeppelin's greatest songs, "Hot Dog" occupies no more than a minor place in the Led Zeppelin catalog. No doubt fun to perform onstage, it remains a relatively weak number and one far removed from the innovative approach the band has always shown.

CAROUSELAMBRA

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 10:34

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, synthesizers
John Bonham: drums, percussion (?)
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978
Mixing
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Might the title of this song be a combination of the words *carousel* and *Alhambra*? *Carousel* because the music induces the same feeling of dizziness one gets when riding on a merry-go-round, and *Alhambra* (that masterpiece of Hispano-Moresque architecture, in Granada, Andalusia) because of certain Arab sonorities in the song. This is just a hypothesis...

Genesis

“Carouselambra” was initially called “The Epic.” The song took shape during rehearsals at Clearwell Castle in May 1978. Musically, it would be the quartet’s last incursion into the world of prog rock (it is even reminiscent at times of Genesis’s concept album *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*), although the lyrics are among the band’s most incomprehensible. There is the voice buried under the sonic muddle, but more significantly there is a succession of diffuse images and impressions that sound as if they could be the product of an artistic imagination under the influence of a powerful hallucinogenic drug.

Sisters of the wayside bide their time in quiet peace. The first line of the first verse could, once again, be referring to the groupies who, ever since the earliest days, had been vying with one another in ruse and allure to seduce the four members of Led Zeppelin while on tour. This being the case, at the beginning of the song Robert Plant seems to be evoking the band’s golden age, a radiant time when *no intruder dared upon to jeopardize the course, upset the run*, a time when *hands were raised toward the sun*, when *still in their bliss unchallenged mighty feast, unending dances shadowed on the day.* By the third verse, however, the heroic times, the rock ’n’ roll bacchanalia, are over. The hunter has severely tested *the unsuspecting and the weak. Who cares to dry the cheeks of those who saddened stand?* Robert Plant himself inevitably comes to mind here, having lost his young son a little more than a year before the band recorded this song, Robert Plant for whom *hard was the journey* and *dark was the way*—to the point where he wanted to *throw down the key*, in other words, considering leaving the group for good.

Robert Plant himself has corroborated this interpretation: “The whole story of Led Zeppelin in its latter years is in that song...and I can’t even hear the words!”[74] Nevertheless, this autobiographical interpretation of “Carouselambra” is not the only possible one.

Led Zeppelin at the Forest National in Brussels on June 20, 1980. Sadly, "Carouselambra" was not on the set list.

The song can also be seen as another epic tale of the kind that Robert Plant, as an avid reader of Tolkien, has always been keen on: a kind of medieval quest, with *faceless legions* standing *in readiness to weep*, at the end of which the hero, having attained a state of knowledge, achieves peace. The singer has also claimed that part of his lyrics describes the tensions within the band at the time, presumably an allusion to Bonham's and Page's problematic addictions. When questioned about this, the Led Zeppelin guitarist would reply without beating around the bush that he had been aware of the tensions but did not know that Plant had translated them into lyrics.

"Carouselambra" was never performed live by the four members of Led Zeppelin.

Production

This song of more than ten minutes' duration is very much in the tradition of Led Zeppelin's musical marathons such as "The Song Remains the Same" and "Achilles Last Stand." While perhaps not as inspired, it is a very good track, despite being overdominated by John Paul Jones's synthesizers, which give it a somewhat dated sound. Of course Jones was not the only offender at this time: the vast majority of recordings from the end of the seventies suffer from excessive use of synthesized sonorities that are not always in the best of taste (many of them, of course, closely associated with disco). The only musical genres to have escaped unscathed were punk and reggae.

"Carouselambra" opens, then, with the Yamaha GX-1, on which Jones produces a rhythmic motif resembling the sound of brass instruments. He is joined almost immediately by the rest of the band, who rush headlong into a rock beat sustained in masterly fashion by John Bonham's superb drums. Bonham gives a display of his legendary drumming style: a powerful attack combined with a unique groove. It also has to be said that he is supported by a dream bass line delivered on his Fender by a John Paul Jones at the top of his form. Jimmy Page in

Classic John Bonham in "Carouselambra": a powerful attack combined with an incomparable groove.

turn endows the track with an indispensable rock feel, playing intense, distorted chords on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One." With the help of the GX-1 hook, the instrumental trio generates an impressive power and momentum very much in keeping with the band's original spirit. This becomes even more evident with Robert Plant's entry, the singer delivering an excellent vocal part based on lyrics whose real meaning is known to him alone (from 0:21). It is a shame his voice is undermixed and overlaid with intrusive effects that hinder comprehension of the words. Fortunately it has been brought up to the right level on the companion disc that comes with the deluxe edition of this album.

After the second verse (from 2:07), the band introduces a motif that comes as something of a surprise. This is an incursion into a kind of Celtic music, with a sound resembling the bagpipes. The same motif recurs at the end of the following verse, where it alternates with a Genesis-like, prog-rock-style instrumental section combining a melodic line played on the guitar with string sounds produced on the GX-1 (between 3:27 and 3:58).

Following this (from 4:06), Jimmy Page, for the first and last time on a Led Zeppelin disc, records a very fine arpeggiated section on what is, without a shadow of doubt, his double-neck Gibson, the famous EDS-1275. This is doubled in stereo, and creates a chiming effect reminiscent of "Stairway to Heaven." Page is supported by Jones, with some very good bass and with pads on the GX-1, and by Bonham, who accentuates the rhythm on the bell of one of his cymbals. Also audible here is a sound resembling bar chimes (a set of brass tubes that collide with one another to produce a tinkling, crystalline sound), although this effect may have been produced on the Yamaha (listen at 4:19, left-hand channel).

The mood of the track then changes, with the tempo gradually slowing to around 110 bpm from 120 bpm (from 4:20). On his Les Paul, Jimmy Page then plays a wonderful phrase (doubled on the left) that is distorted and colored by flanging. The harmonies developed by Page here are enchanting, dreamlike, and somewhat dark hued, typical of his style. Bonham and Jones accompany him in a restrained manner, the Jazz Bass supporting the Gibson with notes resembling those of a double bass. When Robert Plant rejoins his bandmates, his performance is moving and plaintive and accentuates the floating quality of this superb sequence. The sequence is repeated twice, with Plant's voice carried on a long delay in the second repeat (from 6:27). It alternates with two more

"Carouselambra" gave Jimmy Page an opportunity to record on his Gibson double-neck.

arpeggiated parts played on the Gibson double-neck, creating a kind of flow and ebb between darkness and light (listen between 5:09 and 7:01).

Another change of mood then occurs (from 7:03). This time, John Paul Jones takes the reins, foregrounding his synthesizers and excluding any intervention from Page on the guitar for nearly a minute. Jones constructs this new section around an interweaving of different synthesizers including the Yamaha GX-1, but probably also various other keyboards that were available at Polar Studios and belonged to the members of ABBA. The sequenced sounds in the introductory passage probably derive from an Oberheim TVS-1 Two Voice, while the bass part is played on one of the studio instruments (sadly not identified). Bonham's Ludwig is the only acoustic instrument in this section. Meanwhile, Robert Plant harmonizes his voice in a curious manner (from 7:23), giving the impression that a harmonizer was used. It is not until 7:58 that Jimmy Page reenters on guitar, playing a distorted motif on his Les Paul (which he doubles). He then plays a lick in a style reminiscent of Steve Howe of Yes (from 8:24), before allowing Plant to resume his lead vocal at 8:43. The track ends with a fade-out of a guitar ensemble combining the Les Paul and the EDS-1275. It is worth noting that Jimmy Page supposedly used his Gizmotron throughout this number, but it is very difficult to identify the sounds produced by it, so closely interlinked are they with the synthesizer parts.

"Carouselambra" is one of Led Zeppelin's last great songs. It is led mainly by John Paul Jones, who, in the absence of Jimmy Page as a creative force, succeeded in bringing himself and his talent to the fore. It nevertheless suffers as a result of sonorities that are too closely associated with their day, and it is also a matter for regret that the guitarist remains so firmly in the background.

At 10:34, "Carouselambra" is the second-longest song recorded by Led Zeppelin (after "In My Time of Dying," which exceeds eleven minutes).

Robert Plant and John Paul Jones at Knebworth, Led Zeppelin's last performance on British soil.

ALL MY LOVE

John Paul Jones, Robert Plant / 5:53

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars, acoustic guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, synthesizer
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978

Mixing

Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

Genesis

Composed by John Paul Jones with lyrics by Robert Plant, "All My Love" was initially named "The Hook." It is, without a shadow of a doubt, the most moving song on *In Through the Out Door.* This is because it has every appearance of being an homage to little Karac, the *feather in the wind* (who died on July 26, 1977). This penultimate track on the album expresses the emotions the Led Zeppelin singer experienced at that time. The months may have passed, but the pain is still alive. Like a valiant knight of the Round Table, then, the singer with the long blond locks fills his cup, ready for the supreme ritual, with *one voice [that] is clear above the din.* After this the song resembles a kind of magical incantation that perhaps enables the living to communicate with the dead: *Yours is the cloth, mine is the hand that sews time/His is the force that lies within, ours is the fire, all the warmth we can find.*

Musically, "All My Love" is that rarity in the Led Zeppelin catalog: a pop song. Jimmy Page never especially liked it himself: "I was a little worried about the chorus. I could just imagine people doing the wave and all of that. And I thought, 'That's not us.' In its place it was fine, but I wouldn't have wanted to pursue that direction in the future."[9]

"All My Love" was performed during the 1980 continental Europe tour, for the first time in Dortmund on June 17, and for the last in Berlin on July 7.

Production

After "South Bound Saurez," this is the second song to have been co-written by the singer and the bassist. Although Jimmy Page was not particularly fond of the track, he was by no means opposed to it being recorded, in keeping with a democratic process explained by John Paul Jones: "With Zeppelin writing, if you came up with good things, and everybody agreed that they were good things, they got used. There was no formula for writing.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

From his very first entry on drums (between 0:04 and 0:19), Bonham's bass drum pedal can be heard squeaking again. Just like the good old days…

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

In 1979 and 1980, "All My Love" was released as a promotional single in various South American countries such as Brazil (with the A- and B-sides respectively offering mono and stereo versions), Peru (with Herb Alpert's "Rise" on the B-side), and Argentina (with "Hot Dog" on the B-side).

So Robert and I, by the time everybody turned up for rehearsals, we'd written three or four songs. So we started rehearsing those immediately, because they were something to be getting on with."[121] And "All My Love," which was very different from the rest of the Led Zeppelin canon, was one of those songs.

It starts with string sounds produced by John Paul Jones on his Yamaha GX-1. After an initial chord sequence with something of a Baroque flavor, the other instruments then join in. John Bonham, on his Ludwig, lays down a restrained beat that is, however, never short on groove; Jones delivers a bass line that is distinctly pop in spirit; and Jimmy Page initially plays a rhythm guitar part on acoustic, probably his Martin D-28 (right-hand channel, very recessed in the mix), before providing a very good accompaniment on his 1953 Telecaster "Botswana Brown," blending licks, rhythm, and effects produced using his Parsons/White B-Bender.

When Robert Plant launches into his lead vocal, emotion is clearly the order of the day. He sings in what is quite a low range for him, his voice colored by short reverb. Despite the pain the lyrics must have caused him, his delivery remains firm. He seems to have recorded his entire vocal part in a single take—quite a performance.

When he gets to the refrain—the one Page had some difficulty listening to—there is a surprise in store. This is not remotely characteristic of the band's style, instead taking the form of a dyed-in-the-wool pop chorus with a descending harmonic sequence common to many examples of that genre. This is could well have disconcerted fans from the early days, those who swore by tracks such as "Communication Breakdown" and "Immigrant Song." Led Zeppelin had always been in favor of its musical language developing, however, and "All My Love" is the proof. One could even be forgiven for wondering whether the presence of the members of ABBA in the studio had unconsciously influenced Jones in his writing. Either way, Plant's performance is instilled with deep emotion, and it is clear that he feels the full impact of the words he sings.

At the end of the second refrain (from 2:07), the band launches into an instrumental sequence comprising several sections. In the first, Jimmy Page adds a distorted guitar (his Gibson Les Paul?), which doubles the rhythmic pattern in Jones's string sounds. He then bends notes on his Telecaster with the help of his B-Bender to create a floating ambiance sustained by string pads and Bonham's ride cymbal (at 2:22). After this passage, John Paul Jones launches into a "Baroque horn" solo on the GX-1 (from 2:33). It is difficult to imagine a sonority further removed from the musical world of Led Zeppelin. It is frankly dated, and indeed of all the sounds in the band's catalog, this is probably the one that has aged least well, especially as Jones applies a vibrato to his notes and emphasizes the overall effect with reverb.

Jones's solo is followed by a second (from 2:55), this one delivered by Page on a classical guitar (sadly not

Robert Plant sang "All My Love" in memory of his son, Karac, who died in July 1977.

identified) with nylon strings. Page's playing is partly covered by a new string accompaniment executed by Jones with some pomp on the GX-1 (right-hand channel). Finally, after a recapitulation of the initial passages of this instrumental section, with Page again playing lead licks on his Telecaster, Robert Plant resumes his vocal for the final verse. At the end of the subsequent refrain, the key suddenly rises by a tone (at 4:24), an arranger's trick to bump the track up a notch in intensity. The song ends with the refrain repeated ad lib, providing Plant with an opportunity to improvise movingly on the words he addresses to his child. There are alternative versions of the song in existence on which this ending has been cut by about a minute. This is a shame because the band can be heard generating an increasingly radiant power and intensity, culminating in a kind of apotheosis. It is certainly a far superior version to that on the companion disc of the deluxe edition of the album.

"All My Love" is probably the most controversial track on *In Through the Out Door*. Like various others on the album, it would divide Led Zeppelin fans, some considering it one of the best things on the album, and others one of the worst. Either way, it remains a moving tribute from a father to the child he has lost, and for that it commands respect.

I'M GONNA CRAWL

John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:29

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, synthesizer
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November–December 1978
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: November–December 1978
Mixing
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: January 1979
Plumpton Home Studio, Plumpton, East Sussex, England: January 1979
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Jimmy Page

Genesis

The last song on the last Led Zeppelin album to be released in John Bonham's lifetime is credited to John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, and Robert Plant. Once again, however, the focus is on Jones's compositional talent. This is a track that moves between blues rock and soul, and in terms of the lead vocal, it is up there with Plant's best performances. The sensuality he conveys is worthy of singers such as Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding.

The lyrics speak of love: *She drives me crazy, she's the apple of my eye…If I dream too much at night, somebody please bring me down…*It is impossible to imagine anyone more in love. The song is an entreaty culminating in a cry of anguish that expresses all the pain and frustrations felt by the protagonist. Jimmy Page delivers one of his great slow blues solos, and one of the most deeply moving since "Since I've Been Loving You." Despite all this, "I'm Gonna Crawl" was never performed by the band live.

Production

As on many of the songs on *In Through the Out Door*, the intro of "I'm Gonna Crawl" comes as something of a surprise. On the GX-1 John Paul Jones plays a theme with a violin-like sonority in a style recalling Broadway musicals by George Gershwin. This is where the comparison ends, however, because as soon as Jones is joined by his bandmates, the track mutates into a 12/8 blues—one with sophisticated harmonies, but a blues all the same bearing the Led Zeppelin stamp, something not yet much in evidence on this LP. On rhythm guitar (his Gibson Les Paul "Number One") Jimmy Page plays an arpeggiated pattern with a light tremolo, very Steve Cropper–like (right-hand channel). John Bonham supports his bandmates with a nuanced swing but at the same time with no lack of attack on the drums. His Ludwig kit resonates with reverb artificially created in the studio—inevitably of a

"I'm Gonna Crawl," a highlight of *In Through the Out Door,* is credited to three members of Led Zeppelin.

different quality than that obtained at the legendary Headley Grange. Jones emphasizes the harmonies with string pads but also, of course, takes care of the bass line on his Fender.

The Zeppelin machine is up and running, allowing Robert Plant to deliver an exceptional lead vocal. From the very first verse, his performance leaves us in no doubt that he is in full possession of his musical faculties, and Bonham would recognize this performance as one of the singer's finest. Plant alternates between gentle tones and hard-hitting rock, and even ends his final phrase of the verse with an impressive held note drowning in reverb and set off highly effectively by some very good mixing from Jimmy Page (listen at 1:18). Moreover, this is the

In "I'm Gonna Crawl," Robert Plant delivers one of his best vocals and a performance much admired by John Bonham.

first song on the album in which the singer's voice is neither undermixed nor distorted by effects; it is clear, present, and intensely emotional.

At the end of the second verse, Plant launches into a bridge that is more rock than blues, supported by a solid, edgy rhythm section led by a Bonzo, who smacks his Ludwig forcefully while at the same time tempering his drumming with passages of subtlety and delicacy.

It is with a very jazzy roll on the snare drum that Bonham sends Jimmy Page off on an extraordinary solo (from 2:38) on his Gibson Les Paul, plugged (most probably) into his Marshall. The guitarist launches into his improvisation with an abundance of feeling, introducing bends and executing rapid phrases with impeccable fingering—which is not always the case on some of the other tracks on the album, notably "Hot Dog." Page becomes gutsier as the solo unfolds, and marks the most intense passages with distorted chords before returning to a more profound and bluesy style. He finally seems to be both at ease in himself and on sure ground with his material, and therefore able to give his best. This is the last solo Jimmy Page would play on the last track of the band's last studio album, and it has to be said that he's absolutely up to the mark.

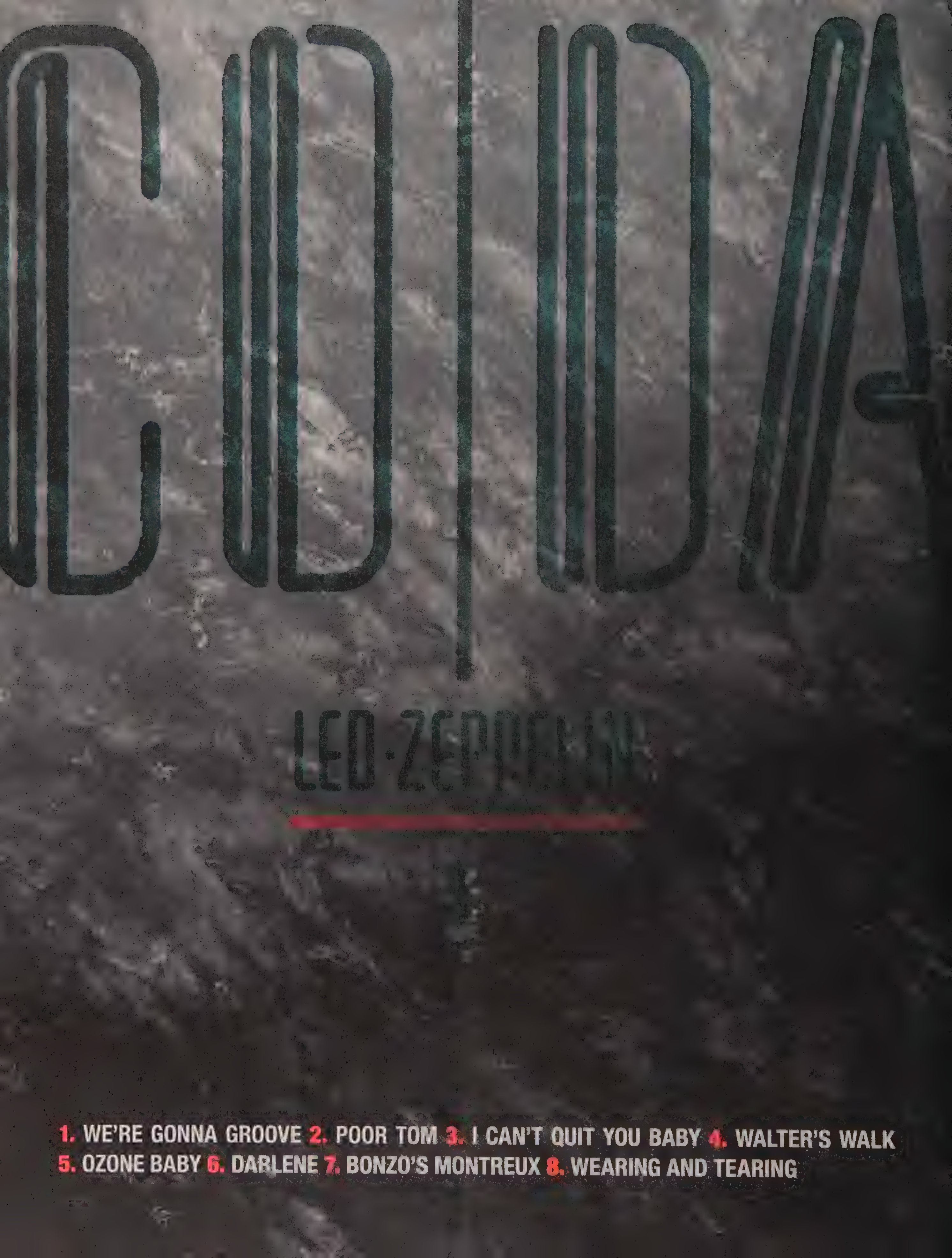
After this solo, Robert Plant resumes his lead vocal for the third verse, which he delivers with passionate, Otis Redding–like outbursts (from 3:54). At the end of the song he gives an extraordinary performance in which he is literally inhabited by the blues, the genre with which he has been so enamored throughout his career. He plays with his words, howls with abandon (listen at 4:42), repeats his phrases in incantatory fashion, and above all delivers a performance drenched in palpable, unique emotion. It has to be said that he is supported by an incredible rhythm section that emphatically raises the tension before taking a back seat and ending the song with a string chord on the Yamaha (at 5:22). This means the job of both opening and closing the song has fallen to the quiet, reserved John Paul Jones—in a sense Jones has had the first and the last words.

Knowing "I'm Gonna Crawl" brings to a close the studio reunion of this exceptional quartet, it may come as a surprise to find, with the benefit of hindsight, that each of the four members has given his best.

On this closing track of the album, Jimmy Page comes up with an exceptional performance that is up there with his greatest flights of lyricism on the guitar.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

"I'm Gonna Crawl" is mentioned in the novel *A Raw Mix of Carelessness and Longing* (2009) by Cecelia Frey.


CODA
LED·ZEPPELIN

1. WE'RE GONNA GROOVE **2.** POOR TOM **3.** I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY **4.** WALTER'S WALK
5. OZONE BABY **6.** DARLENE **7.** BONZO'S MONTREUX **8.** WEARING AND TEARING

ALBUM CODA

RELEASE DATE

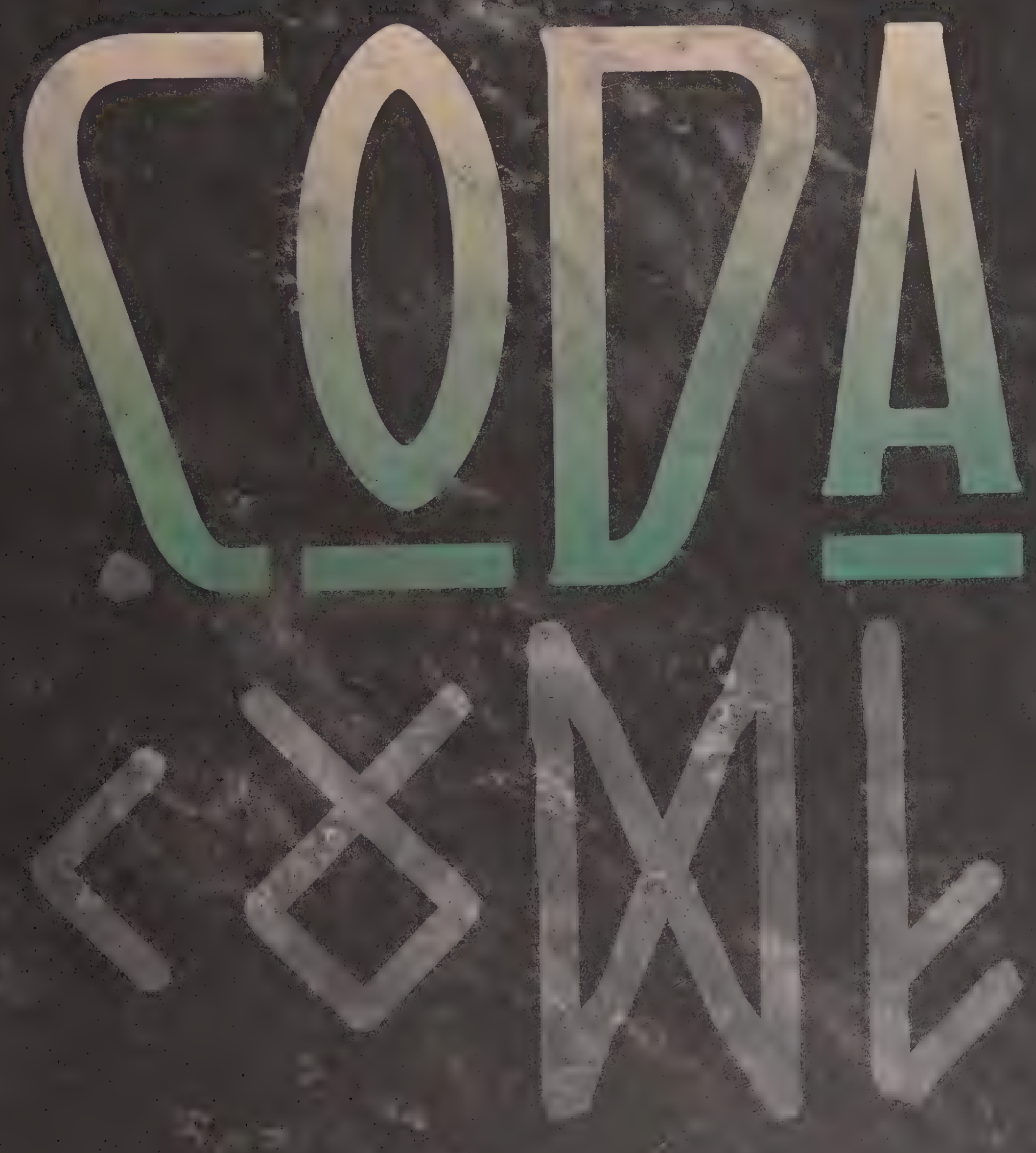
United Kingdom: November 22, 1982

Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER: Swan Song A0051

United States: November 19, 1982

Label: Swan Song Records / RECORD NUMBER:
Swan Song 90051-1

Number 4 (United Kingdom); Number 3 (Canada); Number 6 (United States); Number 18 (France)



One of Led Zeppelin's last live performances, in Zurich on June 29, 1980.

AND THEN THERE WERE THREE...

In just a few years and a handful of seminal albums, Led Zeppelin had elevated themselves to the ranks of the most influential bands of the rock era, alongside the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. This came to an end with the death of John Bonham on September 25, 1980. The months that followed were a bleak time for the three remaining members of the group. Jimmy Page confided that for nearly two years, "I didn't even touch the guitar. I was shattered. I lost a very, very close friend."[11]

While the Led Zeppelin adventure was over for good in terms of live shows, records were another matter. After the release of *In Through the Out Door* (1979), the quartet and Swan Song still owed Atlantic one more album under the contract signed in 1974. Since Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones had resolved not to play as Zeppelin again without their drummer, the only solution was to source material from recordings that already existed but had been dropped from the final track selection for the previous LPs. It was also a way of tackling the issue of all the bootlegs circulating worldwide. "We thought 'Well, if there's that much interest, then we may as well put the rest of our studio stuff out,'"[22] Jimmy Page explained. "They were good tracks," John Paul Jones added. "A lot of it was recorded around the time punk was really happening...basically there wasn't a lot of Zeppelin tracks that didn't go out. We used everything."[122]

Jimmy Page later admitted that producing this album had been a much more complicated task than one might expect. "People say: 'What was the most difficult album?'" he commented, "and that was it. It was a posthumous album—you're going to be using studio outtakes, because we didn't have anything else in the can. It wasn't like we had an album in the can to go, of course we didn't, far from it. It was what it was, but it wouldn't have gone out if I hadn't thought it had a place. But it was a difficult one to do and put together."[112]

The Album

The eight songs assembled on Led Zeppelin's final studio opus span the whole of the seventies. "We're Gonna Groove" and "I Can't Quit You Baby" (the latter not covered in this chapter, but in the chapter on the first *Led Zeppelin* album, in the studio version) are live recordings dating from 1970. "Poor Tom" is an outtake from *Led Zeppelin III* (1970), and "Walter's Walk" from *Houses of the Holy* (1973). "Bonzo's Montreux" was consigned to tape in 1976 during Led Zeppelin and Peter Grant's Swiss exile, while "Ozone Baby," "Darlene," and "Wearing and Tearing" originated from the *In Through the Out Door*

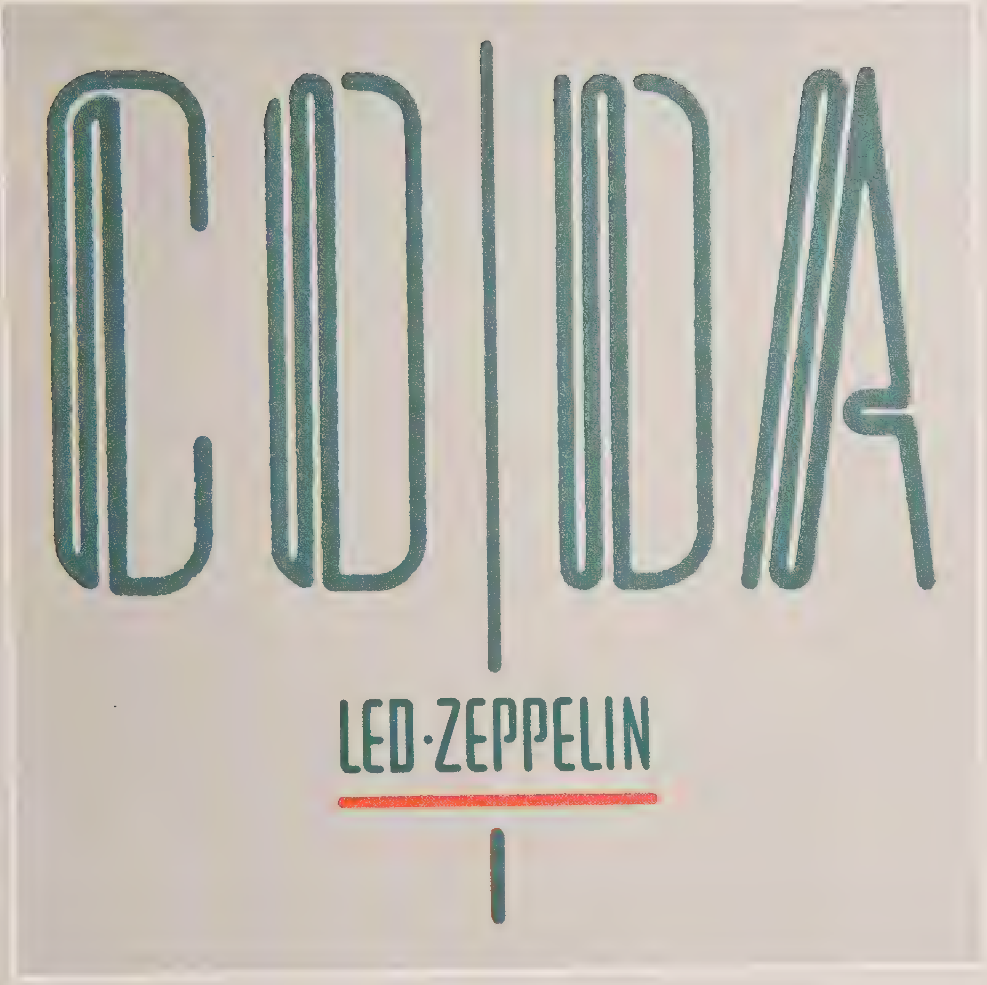
robert plant

Robert Plant with Phil Collins, who was involved in the sessions for his first solo album.

(1979) sessions in Stockholm. The overdubs and mixing were then done at Sol Studio—Jimmy Page's studio in Cookham, Berkshire. Page had just finished recording the soundtrack to *Death Wish II* (1982), directed by Michael Winner (starring Charles Bronson and Jill Ireland), which was released on Swan Song on February 15, 1982. Robert Plant, meanwhile, had assembled a team of top-notch musicians, including Robbie Blunt (guitar), Phil Collins (drums), and Cozy Powell (drums), for the recording of his first solo album, *Pictures at Eleven*, which hit the record stores in June of the same year. As for John Paul Jones, he had a twenty-four-track studio installed in his house in Devon, for use on various projects.

Initially entitled *Early Days and Latter Days*, Led Zeppelin's ninth and final studio album came out under the title *Coda* on November 19, 1982, in the United States and on November 22 in the United Kingdom, five months after Robert Plant's solo debut. *Coda* is a musical term designating the conclusion of a piece of work or body of work. Which says it all. Was this an album too far? Certainly, it had a rather lukewarm critical reception in the United Kingdom. "All eight songs fall into the bag of hard rock—which makes it a non-typical Zeppelin album—so it would seem logical to assume that they were discarded to make way for their more adventurous musical ventures,"[123] wrote Michael Oldfield in *Melody Maker*. Yet in the United States, where the band had long fallen out of favor, there was no such hostility, certainly not on the part of Kurt Loder, who wrote in the columns of *Rolling Stone*: "Produced by Jimmy Page, the album chronicles a ten-year adventure in high guitar drama and maximum blast. If the record seems a bit of a cheat timewise—it clocks in at 32:40—the song selection is a marvel of compression, deftly tracing the Zeppelin decade with eight powerful, previously unreleased tracks, and no unnecessary elaboration."[124]

The general public, for its part, would welcome this opus from the trusty airship with open arms, sending it to number 3 in Canada, number 4 in the United Kingdom, and number 6 in the United States. (That's still a million copies sold!) Moreover, a three-CD deluxe edition of the album was issued in 2015: the first CD contains the original track listing, while the two companion discs offer a collection of alternative versions and rough mixes, along with "Travelling Riverside Blues" (*BBC Sessions*) and "Hey, Hey, What Can I Do," which had



The sleeve of Led Zeppelin's ninth album, with lettering in the Neon typeface designed by Bernard Allum.

been on a single (as the B-side to "Immigrant Song"). Jimmy Page wanted to make it a highlight of their discography: "I wanted to make *Coda* the mother of all Codas—I wanted to make it such a celebration of the group in all its quirkiness and all its directness. Well, that's what this Coda is. It's just got so much fun on it."[112]

If *Coda* Hadn't Happened...

Jimmy Page later revealed that he had actually talked to John Bonham about the next album they wanted to record after *In Through the Out Door.* Describing the latter as a bit too "soft," both of them thought it was time to return to "riffs that would be quite tricky, interesting, provocative." And he went on: "He [Bonham] loved playing this sort of stuff. So we definitely would have done some guitar-driven riff things because he loved all of that and because we'd just done a keyboard album."[112]

Asked whether he would have got more involved in the writing than he had been on *In Through the Out Door,* Jimmy Page wasn't sure. John Paul Jones's ever-increasing contribution to the songwriting did not bother him in the least: "As far as I could see it was just the natural progression."[112]

But destiny took a different course for Led Zeppelin, and so that record never saw the light of day. Jimmy Page did not pick up his guitar for a long time, prior to the making of *Coda*. However, the day came when he decided to get it out of its case again: "I used it as a therapeutic tool really."[112]

The Sleeve

The artwork for *Coda* was another Hipgnosis design. It was the last one the London studio would produce for Led Zeppelin, but also the simplest. The front cover bore the name of the album (in a font called Neon, designed by Bernard Allum in 1978) and the band name printed in green on a beige background. The inner sleeve shows a montage of photos of the members of Led Zeppelin, including some taken at the Bath Festival (1970) and the Knebworth Festival (1979). The back cover, on the other hand, is open to fans' interpretation. What is the significance of those unidentified objects pictured in a rectangular box just below the track listing? Are they flying saucers landing in a desert landscape? Or do they represent the Led Zeppelin discography (vinyl records)? It's up to you!

Above: Neville Crozier (left) and Vic Maile, who had the job of recording Led Zeppelin at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1970, using the Pye Mobile Truck.

Opposite: Robert Plant on stage at the Philadelphia Spectrum. The songs assembled on *Coda* testify to the singer's raw emotional power.

Production

The tracks on *Coda* were recorded courtesy of various studios: Olympic Studios in London and the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, used by the Zeppelin four to capture several of their albums, but also the Pye Mobile Studio and Mountain Studios in Montreux.

The Pye Mobile Truck was used to get the live versions of "We're Gonna Groove" and "I Can't Quit You Baby" down on tape at the Royal Albert Hall in London in January 1970. The band started using this mobile studio from the beginning of 1970, aided by sound engineer Vic Maile and his assistant Neville Crozier. It would be used again later that year to record, notably, the Isle of Wight Festival, the Who (*Live at Leeds*), and Ginger Baker's Air Force (their eponymous album). It came equipped with a sixteen-track custom console built by chief maintenance engineer Ken Attwood using Nuvistor 7586 tubes (this console would later be bought by Jimmy Page), two 3M M23 one-inch eight-tracks, and Tannoy Red/Lockwood monitors. The microphones used were mainly Neumann U67s and AKG D224Es.

Mountain Studios in Montreux, Switzerland, attracted the likes of Yes, David Bowie, AC/DC, Phil Collins, and Sting, among many other artists, and was owned by the band Queen from 1979 to the mid-nineties.

Finally, it was at Sol Studio in Berkshire where Stuart Epps would mix all of the tracks for *Coda*. He had begun his career, at the age of fifteen, working for Dick James, the Beatles' first record producer, and went on to collaborate with Elton John before Gus Dudgeon, Elton John's producer, offered him the job of sound engineer in the recording studio he was setting up in Cookham. Collaborations with George Harrison, Bill Wyman, Paul Rodgers, and Chris Rea followed. Then, in 1980, Jimmy Page bought Sol Studio, also known as the Mill Recording Studio. Besides *Coda*, he also cut the soundtrack for the movie *Death Wish II* there, as well as the two albums (*The Firm* and *Mean Business*) by his new band, the Firm.

Stuart Epps later recalled his years with Page, after the Led Zeppelin guitarist offered him the position of studio manager. "I didn't meet him for 3 months," he laughed. "The Zeppelin myth always painted Page as being a dark disciple of Aleister Crowley—he was a real Howard Hughes character though, I can tell you—I didn't see him that often, he was a strange guy, a total eccentric."[125] Sol Studio was kitted out with a forty-two-track MCI JH-500 automated custom console, a twenty-four-track MCI JH-16 multitrack (although Jimmy Page had his own twenty-four-track 3M two-inch sent over), and JBL 4130 monitors.

The Team

On this collection of songs, credit goes, of course, to the sound engineers and their assistants who worked with Led Zeppelin on the original recordings, such as Andy Johns, Eddie Kramer, Leif Mases, and Lennart Östlund, but also to some newcomers: Vic Maile (the Kinks, Dr Feelgood, Motörhead, etc.), Neville Crozier (Jimi Hendrix, the Who, Chuck Berry), John Timperley at Mountain Studios (Rick Wakeman, Serge Gainsbourg), and Stuart Epps, mentioned above.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The original edition of *Coda* stated that "We're Gonna Groove" had been recorded at Morgan Studios. On later pressings, the credit was changed to the Royal Albert Hall.

WE'RE GONNA GROOVE

Ben E. King, James Bethea / 2:37

Musicians

Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums

Recorded

Pye Mobile Truck, Royal Albert Hall, London: January 9, 1970

Mixing

Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 19, 1982

Technical Team

Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Vic Maile
Assistant Sound Engineer: Neville Crozier
Mixing: Stuart Epps

The rhythm 'n' blues singer Ben E. King, who cut the first version of "We're Gonna Groove" in 1960. It wasn't a great success.

Genesis

"We're Gonna Groove" is an adaptation of "Groovin'," co-written by Ben E. King and James Bethea, and recorded by Ben E. King himself. The song came out in 1960 as the A-side of a single (with, on the B-side, a cover of "Et maintenant" by Gilbert Bécaud, entitled "What Now My Love"), but did not make it onto the charts. The narrator of this song admires his sweetheart's cool moves, so much so that he hopes that *we're gonna raise a family*, or at least that *we're gonna love until the break of day*.

Some ten years later, the Led Zeppelin four were seduced by this young woman who sets souls on fire. They were so taken by the song that they chose "We're Gonna Groove" as the opening number for their shows between January and April 1970. There are actually two Led Zeppelin versions of this song in existence. The first was cut on June 2, 1969, at Morgan Studios in London, on the same day that they recorded "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" and "Thank You" for their second album, as well as "Sugar Mama." The second is a live version recorded at their concert at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on January 9, 1970 (the performance features on the *Led Zeppelin DVD*). It was this second version that Jimmy Page chose for the opener on *Coda*—after he had eliminated the audience noise and added a few guitar overdubs at his Sol Studio in 1982.

Production

On the day of his twenty-sixth birthday, Jimmy Page and his three bandmates were set to give one of their most extraordinary performances at London's famous Royal Albert Hall. There was a rumor going around that John Lennon, Jeff Beck, and Eric Clapton had bought tickets…"Albert Hall was a massive gig for us," Page recalled, "and we really wanted to do the best we could." The prestige of that magical venue was not lost on the guitarist. "On top of that, it was something of a homecoming for

Led Zeppelin at the Royal Albert Hall in London on January 9, 1970, a memorable concert during which Vic Maile, assisted by Neville Crozier, recorded "We're Gonna Groove."

John Paul Jones and I, because we had both grown up around there. So we were all really paying attention to what we were doing."[126]

So it was with "We're Gonna Groove" that Led Zeppelin opened the show on January 9, 1970. The audience is immediately treated to a snare drum onslaught by John Bonham, who marks the beat with his hi-hat, which is immediately joined by Jimmy Page's Gibson Les Paul "Number One." Once John Paul Jones's Fender Jazz Bass arrives on the scene, the trio establishes an incredible funk-rock rhythm of staggering dynamism. Bonzo's playing is such a brilliant demonstration of groove, swing, technique, and feeling that the Ludwig "Green Sparkle" comes across as simultaneously light and powerful. His drumming recalls that of Jimi Hendrix drummer Mitch Mitchell, which had similar jazzy touches. And with Jones's superb bass line and Page's funky accompaniment, the Zeppelin rhythm section is proof enough that this band, which at that point had only been in existence for just over a year, possessed a unique power and character from the outset.

When Robert Plant comes in, the song takes on more of a blues-rock coloring, his intonation at times reminiscent of Janis Joplin. The years of performing at such an exceptional level had taken their toll, and in 1973 he had to undergo an operation on his vocal cords. On this day, though, his performance was ferocious and flawless.

On the guitar front, Jimmy Page used the original 1970 recording but enhanced it with numerous overdubs with his Les Paul in 1982. The first guitar part he added answers the first and third lines of the verses. The tone is noticeably distorted, and Page seems to be using a slide. A second guitar comes in at the ends of the second and fourth lines. Then, on the refrains, he pads out the orchestration with another guitar, and this time its tone is colored by the same excellent effect he had used for the solo of "Fool in the Rain" on *In Through the Out Door*, probably the MXR Blue Box, an octave effect box linked to a fuzz box, which doubles the notes two octaves below the original (listen to the refrain starting at 0:29). The result has often been compared to the noise of a motorcycle.

After another verse and refrain, Page embarks on a solo part, which in fact is much shorter than the original version played at the Royal Albert Hall, and significantly modified (from 1:13). Four guitars are heard in turn: the first is laden with reverb, the second answers it on the right, the third can be heard in the middle, and finally the octave effect kicks in, clearly audible from 1:29, the whole thing enhanced with added reverb and delay expertly distributed between the guitars. The result is stunning and far superior to the original solo played at the concert.

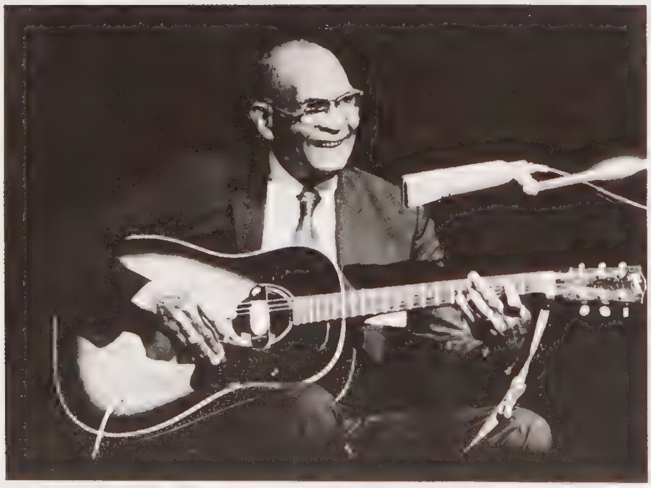
After a final verse, the track ends with two refrains played back-to-back, and finishes cleanly. Jimmy Page rerecorded the ending in the studio to tidy it up and eliminate the applause. Led Zeppelin's version is a complete reworking of the Ben E. King version, transforming it from pure rhythm 'n' blues to funky hard rock. Jimmy Page's decision to use "We're Gonna Groove" as the opener on *Coda* was a good one: this reinterpretation is nothing short of explosive.

The instrumental version of "Poor Tom" can be found on companion disc one of the deluxe edition of the album, and once again one cannot help but admire the caliber of the performance and the creativity of this incredible quartet.

POOR TOM

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:02

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: acoustic guitars (six- and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Olympic Sound Studios, Barnes, London: June 5, 1970 (Studio One)
Mixing
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 1982
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Andy Johns
Mixing: Stuart Epps



Robert Wilkins, with his famous amplified acoustic guitar. His "Prodigal Son" has much in common with "Poor Tom."

Genesis

"Poor Tom" was conceived during Jimmy Page and Robert Plant's stay in Wales in spring 1970. The song was then recorded during the sessions for *Led Zeppelin III*, specifically on June 5, 1970, at Olympic Studios in London. Discarded when it came to the final track selection, the song is nevertheless in keeping with the prevailing acoustic folk spirit of the third opus. Plant's lyrics follow the folk tradition of the British Isles. The song tells the rather sorry tale of Tom, who has worked hard on the railroads for thirty years. He is married to Annie-Mae, an unfaithful wife who *couldn't keep her dress down*. But there *ain't a thing that you can hide from Tom*. One day he had had enough: he took his gun and shot Annie-Mae, destroying not only her life but also his own.

Yet Robert Plant tells us that Tom is the *seventh son*. And legend has it that the seventh son of the seventh son is endowed with supernatural powers (the power to heal and the gift of second sight)…

Production

"Poor Tom" is a little gem that was dropped in 1970, but fortunately resurrected in 1982. This country-blues number holds obvious musical appeal, which is magnified by Led Zeppelin's fantastic arrangements. It is impossible not to be reminded of "Prodigal Son" by Robert Wilkins, which was adapted by the Rolling Stones during their sessions for the legendary *Beggars Banquet* (1968). But this version of "Poor Tom" takes a unique approach, with a particularly striking drum part. John Bonham starts out alone on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle," playing an irresistible shuffle that is a cross between rock and New Orleans, rather in the style of Joseph "Ziggy" Modeliste, the fabulous drummer who accompanied Allen Toussaint, among others. This is one of the very few numbers in the band's catalog where Bonham does not use either a ride cymbal or a crash cymbal; his drumming is centered on his snare drum and bass drum, and he

Robert Plant in a Danish television studio in March 1969. He was an authentic blues harmonica player, as witnessed by "Poor Tom," recorded just under a year later.

marks the beat with his hi-hat. The result is a glorious groove, one that, ultimately, he was able to draw on throughout the entire rest of his career.

Robert Plant embarks on his lead vocal, taking a rather unusual approach for this number: he sings without any accompaniment apart from Bonzo's Ludwig, at least in the first verse and the beginning of the first refrain. He also harmonizes with himself in that first refrain, to great effect (listen at 0:23). The tune is rather like that of a children's nursery rhyme with added blues elements, and Plant's quiet voice adds to this impression. It is just a shame that his vocal is positioned a little too far back in the mix. Fortunately, the complete absence of reverb means his voice is sufficiently audible.

Jimmy Page does not come in until the second half of the first verse (at 0:28). He plays a twelve-string, undoubtedly his Giannini GWSCRA 12-P Craviola. It is in open-C6 tuning (C A C G C E), just as it was in "Friends" and "Bron-Yr-Aur," which came out of the same sessions (*Led Zeppelin III*). He uses a particular picking technique that is a combination of fingers and a plectrum, influenced by guitarists like Bert Jansch and Davy Graham. He seems to double his guitar on certain passages, particularly after the refrains (for example at 0:37).

John Paul Jones comes in last, on his Fender Jazz Bass, probably recorded as a direct take on the console (from 1:00). He opts to play at the top of the neck in order to better blend with Jimmy Page's acoustic guitar. And when he descends to the low notes, the resulting effect is all the more striking and solid. His bass line is melodic and distinctive, and perfectly attuned to Plant's vocal.

Near the song's conclusion (which starts at 2:03), Page seems to double-track his twelve-string and add a six-string (his Harmony Sovereign H1260), which he strums (from 2:17). But it is Robert Plant who particularly stands out with some exquisite blues phrases played on the harmonica (in F). He plays a single instrument to start with before adding a second (on the left, from 2:21). And in the last few bars of the piece, he performs some superb rhythmic phrases on probably at least three harmonica tracks. The result is magnificent.

"Poor Tom" would not have seemed out of place on the band's third opus. So why did it not survive the selection process? Because its approach was too similar to that of "Prodigal Son" by the Reverend Robert Wilkins? Because one more folk song might have upset the balance of the album? Whatever the reason, Jimmy Page finally gave it its due, twelve years after it was recorded.

"Walter's Walk" features some of John Bonham's most violent drumming.

WALTER'S WALK

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 4:31

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars, bass (?)
John Paul Jones: bass (?)
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Rolling Stones Mobile Studio, Stargroves, Newbury, Berkshire: May 16, 1972
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: late 1981–early 1982
Mixing
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 1982
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Eddie Kramer
Mixing: Stuart Epps

Genesis

The riff of this song sprang from Jimmy Page's guitar improvisations on "Dazed and Confused" during shows in 1972, and the song was later recorded in the course of the sessions for *Houses of the Holy*. John Bonham's staggering drumming alone would have rendered it worthy of a place on the album, but Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham ultimately decided otherwise, and so the song remained at the demo stage until Plant penned some lyrics for it and Page added some guitar overdubs for *Coda*.

The words convey a dark mood. Robert Plant sings of doomed love, and the impossibility of communicating: *Every heart that breaks is a heart that's cold…Every tear that falls is a smile that's lost*. Yet the narrator still clings to hope. He walks the path that will take him to the one he loves, calling: *Don't leave!* But his efforts will be in vain…

Production

"Walter's Walk" starts with a typical Jimmy Page riff, worked up while on tour in 1972. The Gibson Les Paul roars, distorted, aggressive, and wild, before being joined by John Bonham, who makes a sensational entrance on his Ludwig "Green Sparkle," violently pounding his floor tom and snare drum. It has a "live" tone, thanks largely to the ingenuity of Eddie Kramer, who had installed Bonzo's drum kit in a conservatory adjoining the main house at Stargroves, in May 1972. The drummer literally lets it rip for the entire length of the track, in one of the most brutal drum performances of his career. His bass drum pedal hammers the drum skin with fury: he channels all his strength into his playing, like a bulldozer in action. He is supported by a bass, which mirrors Page's motif.

In fact, the base track that resulted from this recording dating from 1972 raises two questions: First, is it actually John Paul Jones's bass that we hear? Sources suggest Jimmy Page had in fact rerecorded the bass line in late

Ludwig

Jimmy Page, here in concert in 1972, used a Gibson Les Paul to record the basic track of "Walter's Walk" at the mansion of a certain Mick Jagger.

"Walter's Walk" appears on the album *How the West Was Won*, released in 2003, as part of the "Dazed and Confused" medley, which also includes "The Crunge" (recorded at the Inglewood Forum on June 25, 1972).

1981 or early 1982, on an Alembic Series I played with a pick. Certainly the sharp, bright tonality suggests this is not Jones's Jazz Bass (unlike in the rough mix that appears on the first companion disc to the deluxe edition of the album). Second, the vocal: why is Robert Plant's singing so different from everything else he recorded around the time of *Houses of the Holy*? His tone here is lower, more mature, and very much like that on *In Through the Out Door*, which dates from 1979. It is highly likely that he rerecorded the vocal for *Coda*. As far as the guitars were concerned, all the parts—with the exception of the Gibson Les Paul, which guides the song from start to finish—were added by overdub at Page's Sol Studio. Hence "Walter's Walk" is ultimately a blend of elements from two quite distinct periods in Led Zeppelin's history: the time with Bonham, and the time after Bonham. Two different states of mind combine to produce one of the most violent rock numbers ever recorded by the band.

After Page's intro, and the entrance of the drums and the bass, Robert Plant launches into his vocal in a steady rock voice. Short stereo reverb has been applied to it, colored—it seems—by a harmonizer (the Eventide H949?) After the second verse, he moves into a bridge, at which point Jimmy Page introduces a new guitar part, played on his 1953 Telecaster "Botswana Brown" (on the left, from 1:06). Then, as the song progresses, other guitars come in, either to enrich the main riff (for example, at 1:38), or to support Plant's vocal (listen at 1:57). At the end of the fourth verse, the guitarist embarks on a first improvisation on his Telecaster, with the B-Bender

in action (at around 2:13). He then takes a proper solo, this time on his Les Paul "Number One" (from 2:31). In the last refrain, Robert Plant sings a two-part harmony (at 2:53), and after a final verse, he hands it back to Jimmy Page, who leads into the coda with his rather caustic hard-rock riff, which he plays on his own on his Gibson, double-tracking his guitar and adding plenty of distortion (at 3:23). The number ends on a fade-out, with Bonham raining blows on his Ludwig.

"Walter's Walk" is an enjoyable, highly dynamic song with a catchy riff, but its big failing is that it lacks a good melody, especially on the refrains.

OZONE BABY

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 3:36

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars (six- and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November 14, 1978
Mixing
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 1982
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Stuart Epps

Genesis

"Ozone Baby" could be a song by Television with Tom Verlaine playing like Jimmy Page. Or else Led Zeppelin's categorical answer to the onset of punk and new wave in the latter half of the seventies. Whatever the thinking behind it, the track failed to secure a place on either side of the *In Through the Out Door* LP.

Robert Plant is giving one of his admirers (groupies?)—either real or imaginary—a piece of his mind here. *I hear ya knock on my door…It's too late for you to be my honey…Don't want you wasting my time*, and so on…The rock star evidently has other fish to fry, exciting challenges to pursue: *I could sail a river run dead…I could cry within the darkness, I sail away/I save a lifetime forever…*

Led Zeppelin never played "Ozone Baby" live, apart from its riff, which sometimes made an appearance during a performance of "Dazed and Confused."

Production

This is one of the three songs left over from the sessions at Polar Studios in Stockholm (the others being "Darlene" and "Wearing and Tearing"). What they all had in common was that they did not feature John Paul Jones's Yamaha GX-1, meaning their sound is less dated than that of *In Through the Out Door.*

"Ozone Baby" has the general tone of a rock song, but with a sound that is more in keeping with the aesthetics of the late seventies. The piece is built around a guitar riff, which Jimmy Page plays on two tracks positioned in stereo, on his 1953 Fender Telecaster "Botswana Brown" (and his Parsons/White B-Bender). The sound is distorted, and Page can be heard using his B-Bender on the guitar positioned on the left. John Bonham plays a rock rhythm on his Ludwig "Stainless Steel." His drumming is energetic and has something of a new wave vibe to it. After the apocalyptic assault of "Walter's Walk," his playing here seems to have a relatively light touch…John

John Paul Jones on stage with Robert Plant in the Netherlands, playing the BecVar Series I Triple Omega eight-string bass that he probably used for "Ozone Baby."

Paul Jones, meanwhile, shadows Page's riff, not, apparently, on his Fender Jazz Bass, but on his fantastic eight-string bass guitar, the BecVar Series I Triple Omega, which he used for the sessions for *Presence*.

Robert Plant's lead vocal holds no surprises. He sings the first verse with a trace of humor in his voice, and his performance is enhanced by a short delay, probably generated by a harmonizer such as the Eventide H949. The refrain that follows, while not electrifying, is quite catchy and pleasant, and has something of the Clash about it. In the next verse, the singer harmonizes with himself on the second and fourth lines, which emphasizes the pop feel of the song (at 0:49 and 0:58).

After another refrain, there is a sudden break, which heralds an instrumental section (from 1:15). This time, Jimmy Page executes a new riff on three guitars: the first, on the left, is an electric twelve-string, very probably his Gibson EDS-1275 double-neck, which he used during the Swedish sessions (for "Carouselambra"); the second guitar duplicates the first, coming through on the right-hand side with a distorted tone; and the third, positioned in the center, is used by the guitarist to play licks with the aid of his B-Bender. After around twelve bars, Robert Plant resumes his vocal, and Page accompanies him with two distorted rhythm guitars positioned opposite each other in the stereo picture (from 1:39). Next comes another refrain, which the guitarist prolongs with a fine solo on his Gibson Les Paul. His phrasing bears echoes of his playing on the band's early albums. He performs his solo using his MXR Blue Box, which doubles his notes two octaves lower and distorts the sound, with the result that his playing is thrust to the front of the mix, where it is almost overpowering (from 2:21).

Robert Plant follows with a final refrain, and then at 3:03 he uses an effect to distort his voice: a harmonizer—his own Eventide H949, according to Stuart Epps. The number then ends cleanly on a chord that reverberates for several seconds.

"Ozone Baby" is not a standout number, and since it didn't make the cut for *In Through the Out Door*, the Zeppelin four probably recognized its lack of originality.

DARLENE

John Bonham, John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:06

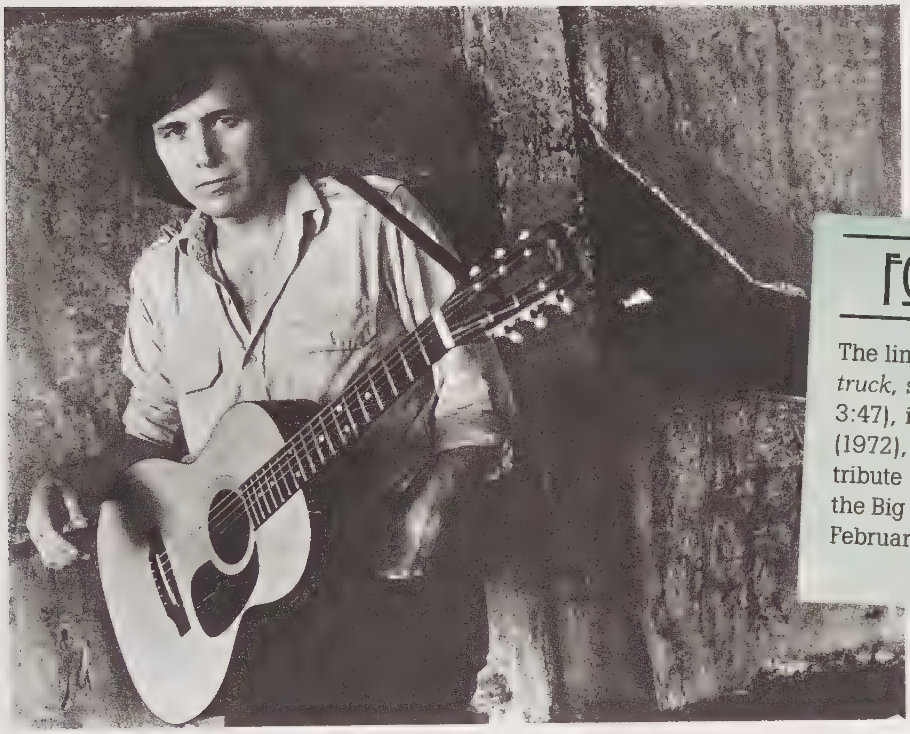
Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass, piano
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November 16, 1978
Mixing
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 1982
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Stuart Epps

Genesis

Like "Ozone Baby" and "Wearing and Tearing," "Darlene" was recorded during the sessions for *In Through the Out Door* at Polar Studios in Stockholm. Conceived during a jam, this song is a very energetic rock 'n' roll–flavored number, with hints of James Burton in Jimmy Page's playing and of a pumped-up Jerry Lee Lewis in John Paul Jones's performance. Still, the quartet took the decision to drop it from the track listing for their eighth album, perhaps because Robert Plant's lyrics are a bit too stereotypical. The narrator, namely, is fantasizing about Darlene, a pretty, young woman who dances in a *tight dress*, whose charms he would like to sample. Later in the song, he confesses *When I see you…walkin' with all those guys/It makes me feel so sick*—guys who, what's more, are prepared to fight for her. We get the impression by the end that, despite everything, the couple have got together, but that neither he nor she is really fulfilled: *I've been workin' too/I've been workin' every day/I've been trying a-get home to you…*Now is a time for regrets, it seems, yet love is still as strong as ever… Another song that Led Zeppelin never played live.

Production

This was the last ever song on an original studio album for which all four members of Led Zeppelin took credit. And there is no denying that it is a great composition. It starts with a riff that would not have been out of place on one of the band's first two albums, before moving into a boogie-woogie passage featuring a superb drum part delivered by the talented John Bonham. The drummer underpins his bandmates with a syncopated rhythm, marking the third and fourth beat of each bar with his snare drum. Jimmy Page is probably on his 1953 Telecaster "Botswana Brown," although the tone resembles that of his Gibson Les Paul "Number One." He plays a rock riff that he doubles and positions in stereo. John Paul Jones



The singer-songwriter Don McLean, whose "American Pie" remains one of the best-known songs of all time.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The line *With a pink carnation and a pickup truck*, sung toward the end of "Darlene" (at 3:47), is taken directly from "American Pie" (1972), the song in which Don McLean pays tribute to Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper, who died in a plane crash on February 3, 1959, *the day the music died…*

accompanies him on his Jazz Bass, but also on the piano—the Bösendorfer at Polar Studios.

Robert Plant starts with the refrain, for a change. It has a catchy tune, with something of a rockabilly feel to it. He sings with verve, in a slightly husky voice. The band members are in perfect harmony, and the four musicians energetically work the groove. In the verses, the rhythm changes, becoming more rock tinged, more Zeppelin, all the time supported by the extraordinary John Bonham and by a Robert Plant in Olympic form. The track features a number of clean breaks, which provide an opportunity for Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones to insert some very good licks, the one on the guitar (for example at 1:07) and the other on the piano (listen at 0:17). And, as usual, the guitarist performs an excellent solo, in this case after the second verse (starting at 1:31). His phrasing is fluid and he unleashes an inspired performance, happy, probably, to be playing a rock number after all the keyboard-led songs produced during the sessions for *In Through the Out Door*. He demonstrates that his talent has lost none of its edge since his early days. The same goes for John Paul Jones, who follows him with a piano solo (from 1:56). This multi-instrumentalist is truly an impressive musician; though a bassist first and foremost, he performs a really incredible improvisation worthy of the top rock pianists.

After a repeat of the introductory riff, Robert Plant resumes the lead vocal for a second part, in triple time,

Group photo taken in 1977, shortly before the recording, in Stockholm, of *In Through the Out Door* and of "Darlene," which was resurrected for *Coda*.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES

At 3:28, you can hear a brilliant drum break played by Bonham on his Ludwig. It is not particularly complicated, but it is impressive to hear it executed by such a masterful drummer.

with more of a boogie flavor, kicked off with a very good drum fill from Bonzo (at 2:30). The singer's performance is excellent, delivered in a taut rock voice, probably one of his best performances to come out of the Swedish sessions. It has rockabilly intonations, and a delay on it, very much like a slapback echo. Then the rhythm is stepped up a gear, moving into purely triple time, with a swing supported by the ride cymbal and the obligatory walking bass (from 3:08). Jimmy Page, too, contributes two very good rhythm guitar parts, bringing a coherence to the whole with some distorted riffs. Plant continues with his Elvis-style posturing while John Paul Jones—here he is again—sets the keys of his Bösendorfer alight with a frenetic boogie-woogie interlude. Page then wraps up the song with another solo, which ends with a long fade-out lasting some thirty seconds, punctuated by Bonham's rhythm breaks.

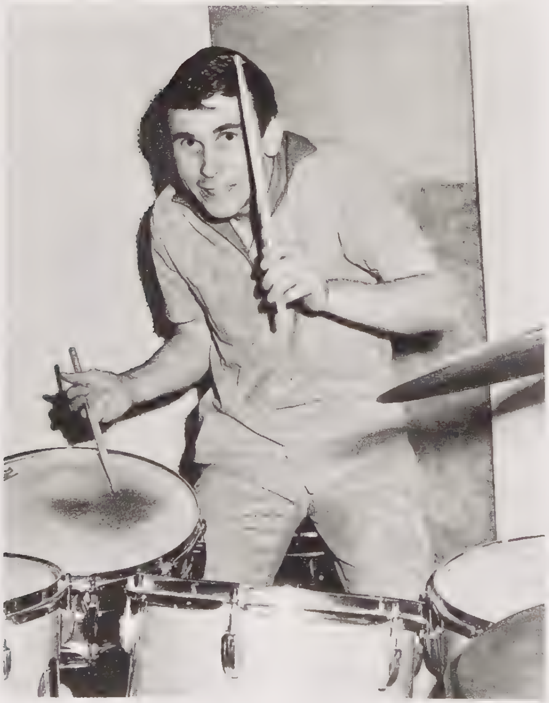
"Darlene" is a very good number, delivered by four musicians at the pinnacle of their talent, and some might argue it was more deserving of a place on *In Through the Out Door* than "South Bound Saurez," another boogie number, but of inferior quality.

IN YOUR HEADPHONES
This piece has been spliced in several places, after Stuart Epps had to edit it down from the eight minutes to just over four minutes. One of these, in particular, is not a great success (listen at 3:01)...

BONZO'S MONTREUX

John Bonham / 4:22

Musicians
Jimmy Page: electronic treatments
John Bonham: drums, timpani, timbales, bongos
Recorded
Mountain Studios, Montreux Casino, Switzerland: September 12, 1976
Mixing
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 1982
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: John Timperley
Mixing: Stuart Epps



Sandy Nelson, the famous California drummer of the early sixties, who recorded solo and for Phil Spector.

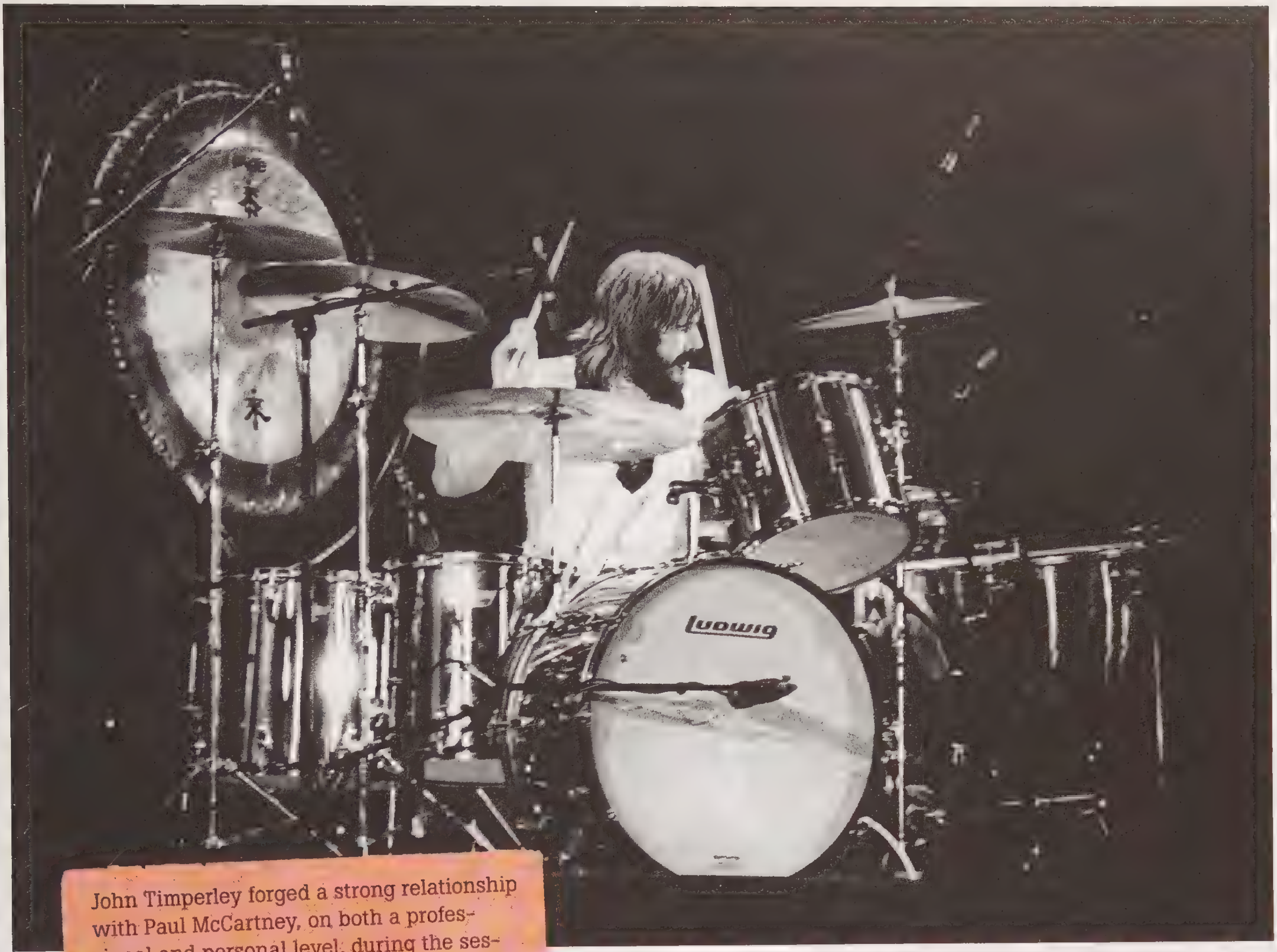
Genesis

Was John Bonham planning to record a solo album, as the British music press were suggesting in autumn 1976? It is not out of the question. The recording that came to be known as "Bonzo's Montreux" was produced at Mountain Studios in Montreux, during Led Zeppelin's period of tax exile in Switzerland. These same studios had already hosted the Rolling Stones sessions, in 1976, for *Black and Blue*, and, in the following years, they would welcome Yes (*Going for the One*, 1977), Queen (*Jazz*, 1978), and David Bowie (*Lodger*, 1979). Jimmy Page once revealed one of his favorite drummer's key influences: "I am sure John's inspiration came from the Brazilian Samba schools."[127]

The sound engineer who assisted John Bonham and Jimmy Page with their project was John Timperley: originally from a classical music background (London's IBC Studios in the late fifties), he made a name for himself in the rock world when he recorded Cream's first album, *Fresh Cream* (1966), and helped out on the Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967).

Production

Of the four band members, only Bonzo had opted to go into exile in Switzerland in 1976. "John was alone in Montreux at the time [Bonham was taking a tax year out of the UK in 1976]," Jimmy Page recalled, "so I went there to cheer him up."[120] One thing led to another, and the idea of creating a piece based on drums and percussion took hold of the two musicians. "John liked all those old Sandy Nelson records, because of the drums," the guitarist explained. "So we wanted to make something that sounded like a drum orchestra."[120] And in 1981, when the *Coda* project came along, there was no doubt in Jimmy Page's mind that "Bonzo's Montreux" had to be included in the playlist: "That, for me, was the backbone of the album. Under the circumstances, there couldn't be anything better than having a drum orchestra of John Bonham."[110] Oddly



John Timperley forged a strong relationship with Paul McCartney, on both a professional and personal level, during the sessions for *Magical Mystery Tour*. Many years later, in 1991, it was he who recorded *Liverpool Oratorio*.

John Bonham, here at the Inglewood Forum on March 25, 1975, was influenced by Sandy Nelson when he came to record "Bonzo's Montreux."

enough, it was a while before Robert Plant and John Paul Jones got to hear the piece, as their two bandmates had recorded it on their own in complete secrecy.

Ever since the band's inception, Bonham and Page had shared a common love of drums, spending hours getting the right tuning, searching for the perfect sound, always looking to convey both their power and their subtlety. They regarded the drums as a distinguished instrument that needed to be shown off to best effect in a recording. The two musicians also shared an interest in samba bands. Montreux provided them with a dream opportunity to put this tribute together. As Jimmy Page explained: "There was this studio next to the casino. I suggested we record something, that we work on that idea of the drum orchestra. He had his drumkit with him, and we got [timpani], timbales, congas, the whole lot, sent over!"[119]

So "Bonzo's Montreux" was recorded in Switzerland, at the superb Mountain Studios, soon to be bought by Queen (in 1979). At the controls, John Timperley; on production, Jimmy Page; on the Ludwig (or the "Silver Sparkle" according to some sources, or the "Green Sparkle" according to others), John Bonham. The drummer gets the track under way with a countdown. He then attacks a syncopated funky rock rhythm, his bass drum pedal going full bore. He constructed the instrumental not as an actual solo, in the manner of "Moby Dick," but rather as a drum pattern around which he adds percussion, breaks, and variations. Following one after the other we have timpani (from 0:43, which he modulates with a pedal, for example at 1:49), timbales (from 1:29), and bongos (from 2:17). The Ludwig and the various percussion instruments benefit from the studio's natural reverb, enhanced with artificial reverb (EMT 140 plate?)

John Bonham in action, during the filming of *The Song Remains the Same.*

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

The Canadian figure skater Kurt Browning used "Bonzo's Montreux" in 1993 when he performed his short program competition routine, choreographed by Clarence Ford. He used it again during his 1995–1996 season, after he had turned professional.

But, ultimately, they cause a certain amount of confusion, as the mix is rather cluttered (in terms of both dynamics and instruments)—especially as Jimmy Page applied an effect to the timbales that lent them a Caribbean color. The producer explained: "I had just acquired a harmonizer. One of the effects was like a steel drum, very percussive […] I suggested to him that we use it to add texture. He loved it! He agreed it really did sound like steel drums; it was very musical."[119] The effect in question, produced by an Eventide H949 harmonizer, is actually more discreet on the version that appears on the first companion disc to the deluxe edition of the album. "You hear all the [timbale] tunings, the textures, the placements,"[119] Page pointed out, concluding: "'Bonzo's Montreux' was recorded in the space of an evening. I was going 'Come on, John! Come on, John!' It was absolutely magic."[119] Note the use of reverse reverb at the beginning of the timbale section (at 1:32).

"Bonzo's Montreux" was the last instrumental ever to feature on one of the band's studio albums. Although it is superior to "Moby Dick" in terms of quality, this new solo demonstration by the master drummer nevertheless is not in the same league as his live performances. And, as Jimmy Page later said, "It was fun, but [this track] wouldn't have fitted on any of the [other] albums."[120]

WEARING AND TEARING

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant / 5:27

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Polar Studios, Stockholm, Sweden: November 21, 1978
Mixing
Sol Studio, Cookham, Berkshire: February 1982
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Executive Producer: Peter Grant
Sound Engineer: Leif Mases
Assistant Sound Engineer: Lennart Östlund
Mixing: Stuart Epps

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Copies circulated of the EP the band had been planning to release in time for their performance at the Knebworth Festival in August 1979, with "Wearing and Tearing" on the A-side and "Darlene" and "Ozone Baby" on the B-side.

Genesis

Coda concludes with Led Zeppelin's most decidedly punk number, their answer, in a blast of decibels, to the sounds of the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and the Ramones. Plant even allows himself the luxury of singing almost a cappella, as in the glory days of "Black Dog." *It starts out like a murmur/Then it grows like thunder/Until it bursts inside of you*, he sings by way of introduction. Then the singer proceeds to prescribe the best cure there is if you're feeling blue: *All you got to do is move.* Or this, perhaps betraying a hint of the old hippie in him: *Go back to the country/Feel a change is good for you.* However, there may be another interpretation of "Wearing and Tearing": *Any second now will do/Throw the door wide open…What's that creeping up behind a you?/It's just an old friend…And what's he got for you?*—these could be the words of a junkie...

The Led Zeppelin four took undisguised pleasure in recording "Wearing and Tearing." After it failed to make the selection for the *In Through the Out Door* album, they seriously considered releasing it as the A-side of an EP timed to coincide with their appearance at the Knebworth Festival in August 1979; they had even planned to market it under a typically punk-style assumed name, something with the same kind of ring to it as the Damned or the Sex Pistols. But the plan failed to materialize due to problems with the pressing. Nor was "Wearing and Tearing" ever aired in public during the Led Zeppelin years. However, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant did perform it when they appeared at Knebworth on June 30, 1990.

Production

Asked why "Wearing and Tearing" was not included on *In Through the Out Door*, Jimmy Page replied quite simply: "Because the album was so much lighter, it wouldn't have fitted. 'Wearing And Tearing' was 'One, two, three, four, charge.' My goodness! It was like an assault. It

Jimmy Page and Robert Plant at Knebworth on June 30, 1990. "Wearing And Tearing," recorded twelve years previously, was on their set list.

wasn't in character with something like 'All My Love.'"[120] True, this third and final outtake from the Swedish sessions is of a very different character than the keyboard-led songs that feature on that last studio opus. It was more the kind of thing the guitarist probably had in mind as the follow-up to *In Through the Out Door*, if destiny hadn't decreed otherwise.

So Led Zeppelin's "Wearing and Tearing" serves as a kind of rock response to the punk movement. In fact, the track is not as thoroughly punk as it might be, as it is musically much too sophisticated for this genre, and is ultimately not as aggressive as one might expect, despite its rapid tempo…However, from the outset, Jimmy Page's first riff serves to reassure any fans who were worried that his Gibson Les Paul may have lost some of its legendary aggression. For nearly fifty seconds, he plays a whole series of riffs and distorted phrases with a "garage band" sound quality, probably achieved using his Marshall; he is supported by John Paul Jones's Jazz Bass (which is positioned slightly too far back in the mix) and John Bonham's Ludwig. Bonham is perfectly comfortable with this kind of rhythm. He goes at it to his heart's content, pounding his kit with a vengeance. Live-effect reverb has been applied to his drums; the sound can't match Headley Grange, but the effect is satisfactory nonetheless. The only minor complaint is that the bass drum is too much at the fore, with over-prominent reverb, giving it a somewhat pulpy consistency.

After a first break, it is Robert Plant's turn to make his entrance (at 0:53). The register is at the limit of what his vocal cords can manage, and he seems to struggle slightly with the first three lines. Yet despite everything, his performance is still excellent and perfectly suited to the spirit of the song. Strangely, the tension and energy generated throughout the introduction drop off during the verses. Plant sings practically a cappella, with the band accompanying him only at the start of each bar. It is an interesting effect, but too elaborate to be genuinely punk. The refrains, by contrast, are very dynamic, the words blasted out with onomatopoeic force (*ya know…*), calling to mind the early albums by the Police.

After the third refrain (from 3:23), Page launches into an instrumental section with a series of riffs, power chords, and hooks; it is not a solo as such, but rather an explosion of punk-style guitar swagger, reinforced both by Bonzo's brutal groove and by a series of war cries, akin to dog barks, uttered by Plant, who is evidently attempting to mimic the mannerisms of the "no future" brigade (listen at around 3:58). Plant continues with a final verse, followed by a refrain. The track's closing sequence is introduced by a descending riff played by Jimmy Page, which is double-tracked and positioned in stereo (at 4:53). Then the band takes up its supercharged rhythm again against a background of power chords, with Plant double-tracking his vocal to create a call-and-response effect, which he sings as a kind of punk parody (from 5:03). And it is with a final beat of the snare drum that the track ends.

"Wearing and Tearing" therefore marks a blistering end to the Led Zeppelin story written by these four extraordinary musicians over the course of barely twelve years, a twelve years in which they shared their utterly remarkable vision of music. It will remain forever close to the hearts of all their fans.

1. YOU SHOOK ME **2.** I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY **3.** COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN **4.** DAZED AND CONFUSED **5.** THE GIRL I LOVE SHE GOT LONG BLACK WAVY HAIR **6.** WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE **7.** COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN **8.** TRAVELLING RIVERSIDE BLUES **9.** WHOLE LOTTA LOVE **10.** SOMETHIN' ELSE **11.** COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN **12.** I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY **13.** YOU SHOOK ME **14.** HOW MANY MORE TIMES

1. IMMIGRANT SONG **2.** HEARTBREAKER **3.** SINCE I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU **4.** BLACK DOG **5.** DAZED AND CONFUSED **6.** STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN **7.** GOING TO CALIFORNIA **8.** THAT'S THE WAY **9.** WHOLE LOTTA LOVE (MEDLEY : BOOGIE CHILLUN / FIXIN' TO DIE / THAT'S ALRIGHT MAMA / A MESS OF BLUES) **10.** THANK YOU

1. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN **2.** WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE **3.** DAZED AND CONFUSED **4.** WHITE SUMMER **5.** WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE **6.** COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN **7.** I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY **8.** YOU SHOOK ME **9.** SUNSHINE WOMAN

THE COMPLETE
BBC SESSIONS

ALBUM THE COMPLETE BBC SESSIONS

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: September 16, 2016

Label: Atlantic Records / RECORD NUMBER: Atlantic 8122794389

Number 3 (United Kingdom)

The Zeppelin four backstage in London in 1969 for what would become the *BBC Sessions*.

LED ZEPPELIN ON THE AIRWAVES

At the end of the sixties, the Swinging London era was on its way out, but English blues-rock bands remained as figureheads of the British Invasion. Led Zeppelin was the band of the moment. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham…four strong personalities, three excellent musicians, and a sex symbol for a singer. Would they do as well as the recently disbanded Yardbirds, as John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, as Cream? That was the question…a question that received a resounding answer when the quartet made their first appearance on a BBC broadcast on March 3, 1969. On that day, John Peel, the legendary presenter of the radio show *Top Gear*, was to feature them on his show for the first time. It was an important encounter for the band, as the presenter was genuinely supportive of their music every time they appeared, as Jimmy Page confirmed: "Peel was great—he obviously did champion us […]. Because we spent so much time in the States in the beginning [of our career], we weren't able to do so much in England. It was slower catching up. And we didn't have radio here [in the United Kingdom] like what was called underground radio over there. So we got these little slots on the BBC."[128]

Jimmy Page, tireless producer of the Zeppelin oeuvre, saw these performances at the BBC as vital for the band, and the only way for it to get itself known on the airwaves, because the foursome had refused from the outset to record any singles (with the exception of "Whole Lotta Love," which was plugged via every channel), and singles were practically the only way to secure radio and television airplay. The four musicians approached these performances full of confidence, without fear, and with an infectious energy: "We were testing ourselves as much as anything else," the guitarist later said, "just really going for it."[128]

The Album

The first version of *BBC Sessions*—the standard version—was released on November 11, 1997, and consisted of two CDs and twenty-four recordings. Nineteen years later, on September 16, 2016, to be precise, *The Complete BBC Sessions* came out, boasting an additional nine tracks. While the 1997 version had reached number 23 in the United Kingdom and number 12 in the United States, the 2016 version made it to number 3 and number 21 respectively in those two countries. In Japan, as well, the album scored considerable success—as witnessed by its number 3 position on the charts—as it did in Germany and Belgium, where this compilation climbed to number 7 and number 12, respectively.

John Peel, legendary BBC disc jockey and a big promoter of English rock in the sixties.

So *The Complete BBC Sessions* consists of three CDs, covering six sessions.

The first of these was recorded on March 3, 1969, at the Playhouse Theatre on Northumberland Avenue, London, and was broadcast on March 23 on John Peel's *Top Gear* program: the songs played were "Communication Breakdown," "Dazed and Confused," "You Shook Me," and "I Can't Quit You Baby."

The second session dates from March 19, 1969, at Maida Vale, Studio Four, Delaware Road, in London. It went out on the BBC World Service *Rhythm and Blues* program on April 14, and featured "Sunshine Woman," "I Can't Quit You Baby," and "You Shook Me."

The third took place at the Aeolian Hall studio, New Bond Street, London, on June 16, 1969, and was broadcast on June 22 on *Chris Grant's Tasty Pop Sundae*: the band played "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair," "Communication Breakdown," "Somethin' Else," and "What Is and What Should Never Be."

The fourth session was held at Maida Vale Studio Four again, this time on June 24, 1969, and hit the airwaves on June 29, on John Peel's *Top Gear*. It featured "Whole Lotta Love," "Communication Breakdown," "What Is and What Should Never Be," and "Travelling Riverside Blues."

The fifth took place against the backdrop of the Playhouse Theatre again. Recorded on June 27, 1969, it was transmitted on August 10 on *Top Gear*. This session comprised "Communication Breakdown," "I Can't Quit You Baby," "Dazed and Confused," "White Summer," "You Shook Me," and "How Many More Times."

Finally, the sixth session took place at the Paris Cinema, Lower Regent Street, London, on April 1, 1971, and was broadcast on the *John Peel Sunday Concert* on April 4. The band played "Immigrant Song," "Heartbreaker," "Since I've Been Loving You," "Black Dog," "Dazed and Confused," "Stairway to Heaven," "Going to California," "That's the Way," "What Is and What Should Never Be," "Whole Lotta Love" (Medley), "Thank You," and "Communication Breakdown."

Between the first session, which took place two months after the release of the first opus, and the sixth session, which came between *Led Zeppelin III* and *Led Zeppelin IV/Four Symbols*, the quartet had evolved from a highly promising blues-rock/heavy-rock group into a major name on the rock scene. These various recordings for the BBC perfectly chronicle the phenomenal rise of Led Zeppelin over the course of a mere twenty-four months…

The Playhouse Theatre, Northumberland Avenue, where, on March 3, 1969, Led Zeppelin played a show, which was broadcast three weeks later on John Peel's *Top Gear*.

THE FIRST TIME

Jimmy Page's first performance for the BBC had been in the days before Led Zeppelin: it was as a studio musician, when he accompanied Tom Jones in 1965. He performed again for the BBC with the Yardbirds in 1967, as a member of the band.

The sleeve and liner notes for *The Complete BBC Sessions* kept things simple: illustrations and black-and-white photographs by Barry Plummer, Dick Barnatt, Chris Walter, and Jean-Pierre Leloir, on a white background. The back cover, on a black background, is the negative of the front cover.

The Team

The six different recording sessions involved a succession of producers and sound engineers, all staff of the BBC. The producers were Bernie Andrews, Jeff Griffin, Paul Williams, and John Walters. Sound engineer credits go to Pete Ritzema, Bob Conduct (assistant sound engineer), Joe Young, and Tony Wilson, though the engineers on the third and sixth sessions are unknown. Then, on *The Complete BBC Sessions*, released on September 16, 2016, John Davis was in charge of remastering at Metropolis, and Drew Griffiths was brought on board as an additional sound engineer.

THE GIRL I LOVE SHE GOT LONG BLACK WAVY HAIR

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, John Estes, Willie Dixon, Robert Johnson / 3:03

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitar
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Aeolian Hall, Studio Two, London: June 16, 1969
Technical Team
Producers: Paul Williams, Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: ?

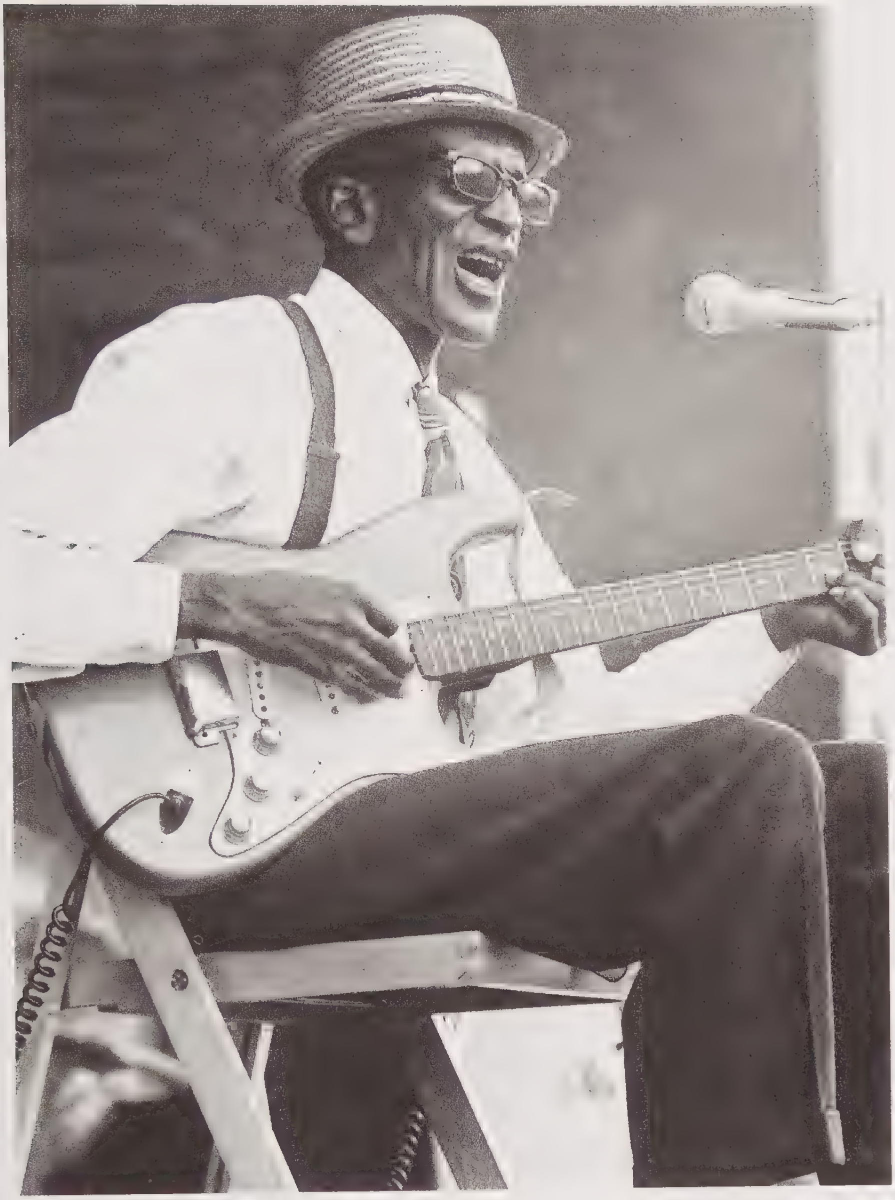
In 1964, Sleepy John Estes played at the third American Folk Blues Festival, the event that helped many of the pioneers of the blues to gain recognition and contributed to the English blues boom of the sixties.

Genesis

Also known by the abbreviated title "The Girl I Love," "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair" had been part of the Led Zeppelin repertoire practically since the band's beginnings. The four of them performed it at the Aeolian Hall Studio on June 16, 1969, and it is this version that was broadcast on June 22 on *Chris Grant's Tasty Pop Sundae*, a show on BBC Radio One, and that was subsequently released on the first *BBC Sessions* album. Led Zeppelin played it again on their UK tour in summer 1969.

The reason the names of John Estes, Willie Dixon, and Robert Johnson were added to those of Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham was that this song comes directly from the founding fathers of the blues. It starts out as an adaptation of "The Girl I Love, She Got Long Curly Hair," a blues number by Sleepy John Estes that he recorded in 1929 on the Victor label. The subject of this song is summed up in its title: the narrator, who is on the road to Brownsville, Texas, is head over heels in love with a young woman with curly hair. Forty years later, Robert Plant does not tell us whether he is heading for Brownsville, but he too is very much in love with a girl who, in this case, has wavy hair. But apart from the similarity of the titles, the Led Zeppelin version has little in common with that of Estes. As for Willie Dixon and Robert Johnson, the reason their names appear in the credits is simply that Led Zeppelin embellished their version of "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair" with borrowings from "Let Me Love You Baby" by the former and from "Traveling Riverside Blues" by the latter.

"The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair" was released as a single (with "Whole Lotta Love" [Medley] as the B-side) in November 1997. The song peaked at number 4 on the Billboard Mainstream Rock chart and in the Alternative chart of the Canadian magazine *RPM*.



Sleepy John Estes. The Led Zeppelin number "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair" is based directly on a song recorded by the Tennessee bluesman in 1929.

Production

From the opening notes of this blues rocker, we are plunged back into the sound and phrasing typical of early Led Zeppelin: Jimmy Page takes off on his own on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One," with a blistering riff distorted by his Tone Bender Professional MKII, amplified by his Marshall 1959SLP, and enhanced with added reverb from the latter. Interestingly, his riff bears a slight similarity to that on "Moby Dick," on the second album. Page is soon joined by John Bonham, who provides an excellent rhythm on his Ludwig "Natural Maple," with hints of Tamla Motown, an influence shared by John Paul Jones, who supports both the drums and the guitar by simply taking up the riff on his Fender Jazz Bass. The trio are bursting with energy, and playing in perfect step with one another, giving us an inkling of the long hours they had spent playing together, even though the band had been in existence for less than a year at that point.

Robert Plant comes in after about thirty seconds, in a voice that is phenomenally powerful. He yells into his microphone as he reaches for the high notes. He gives a bluesy performance, but with that distinctive quality that future hard-rock and metal singers would aspire to. He may be lacking the maturity that he would later acquire, but his voice already displays its unique texture.

After two verses, Plant sends his bandmate off on an aggressive solo, with an improvised "Take it, Jimmy!" (at 1:32). The guitarist plays some lovely phrases on his Les Paul, using his fingertips for vibrato, and, despite the odd fluffed note, the result is compelling. A final verse follows, and he sets off again on a spirited improvisation, elaborated with adrenaline-packed drum fills from Bonzo.

SOMETHIN' ELSE

Sharon Sheeley, Bob Cochran / 2:06

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, tambourine
Jimmy Page: electric guitar
John Paul Jones: piano
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Aeolian Hall, Studio Two, London: June 16, 1969
Technical Team
Producers: Paul Williams, Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: ?

Sharon Sheeley was with Eddie Cochran (and Gene Vincent) at the time of the accident in Bath, England, on April 17, 1960, in which the rock 'n' roll singer was killed. The young woman suffered a fractured pelvis.

Genesis

"Somethin' Else" is a song written in 1959 by Bob Cochran and Sharon Sheeley, Eddie Cochran's girlfriend. The pioneer and dandy of rock 'n' roll recorded it as the A-side of a single (with "Boll Weevil Song" as the B-side), which, strangely, did not make it into the Billboard charts. Strange indeed, considering this song soon became established as one of the big standard numbers of the rock 'n' roll era and, in particular, spawned various versions, including the Sex Pistols' take on it in the United Kingdom, with Sid Vicious on lead vocals (1979). The narrator is desperate to date a pretty girl he has seen going down the street—a girl who really is *somethin' else*...So he works hard to save up enough money to buy himself a car, hoping to catch her attention that way—but *Just a '41 Ford not a '59*.

Ten years after Eddie Cochran, it was the Zeppelin four's turn to get into that '41 Ford and take it for a spin, rock 'n' roll–style. The recording of "Somethin' Else," like that of "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair," dates back to June 16, 1969, when they played it at Aeolian Hall Studio for the BBC Radio One show *Chris Grant's Tasty Pop Sundae*. The group then performed it again at the Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco on November 6, 1969, and at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on January 9, 1970.

Production

The Led Zeppelin version is inevitably different from the Eddie Cochran take, yet not as far removed from it as one might imagine. The two pieces are close in tempo, and the band does not bring its hard-rock identity to the fore but instead gives a somewhat timorous performance. It starts with the immortal riff dreamed up by Cochran, played by Jimmy Page on his Gibson Les Paul. John Paul Jones supports him not on the bass, but on the piano. John Bonham provides vigorous drumming, but his skills are not as evident here as they could be. This is probably

The rock 'n' roll pioneer Eddie Cochran and his girlfriend, Sharon Sheeley, who wrote "Somethin' Else" with Eddie's brother, Bob Cochran.

due to an overly broad take, which makes it impossible to determine the subtleties of each musician.

Robert Plant, meanwhile, accompanies the others on the tambourine from the opening bars (though it is slightly too far forward in the mix). Then he launches into the first verse in a high-pitched voice, delivering a fine performance, his voice colored by fairly prominent reverb. However, in his case too, the signature Zeppelin style is lacking. He gives a quality performance, rockabilly being among his musical influences, but it could have used a little more aggressiveness.

For once it is John Paul Jones who takes the solo here (from 1:02). He is on the piano, playing in a style reminiscent of Jerry Lee Lewis, and he does a great job of it, despite the odd shaky passage (around 1:19). At 1:20, Jimmy Page lets a wrong note escape from his Les Paul at the beginning of Jones's concluding phrase.

As far as the mix is concerned, the sound engineer may have been a little heavy-handed with the volume and the reverb on the piano, and, oddly, the overall level is lowered at the end of the solo (from 1:24). Eventually, after a final verse, the track ends on a rapid fade-out.

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones in Boston, Massachusetts, in May 1969, during their second American tour, shortly before the *BBC Sessions*.

TRAVELLING RIVERSIDE BLUES

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, Robert Johnson / 5:11

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitars (six- and twelve-string)
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Maida Vale, Studio Four, London: June 24, 1969
Technical Team
Producers: John Walters, Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: Tony Wilson

Genesis

"Traveling Riverside Blues" was recorded by the legendary Robert Johnson at his last recording session, on June 20, 1937. The singer recounts the troubles of a man who is a little too keen on women. Although he has a number of women in Vicksburg, Mississippi, he has now set his heart on another woman with a pretty little face, and he invites her to have some fun with him and dance all night long, in Friars Point, Mississippi. But the lady in question, who has *front teeth crowned with gold*, is not the type to allow herself to be pushed around. *She got a mortgage on my body, now, and a lien on my soul*, laments the master of the Delta blues. And it seems she is not lacking in expertise when it comes to dealing with men: *Now you can squeeze my lemon 'til the juice run down my leg*.

"Travelling Riverside Blues" was added to the Led Zeppelin repertoire early on. Their version for *The Complete BBC Sessions*, recorded at the Maida Vale Studios in London, dates from June 24, 1969. It was then broadcast on June 29 on John Peel's *Top Gear*. Robert Plant's lyrics are in more or less the same vein as those that Robert Johnson had sung thirty-two years previously, starting with the very suggestive lemon reference, which crops up again in "The Lemon Song" during the sessions for the second album...We also learn that his girlfriend is sixteen years old, and that she is his *brownskin sugar plum...She's a kindhearted woman*, he tells us. *She studies evil all the time*. These last two phrases are taken from another Robert Johnson song, "Kind Hearted Woman Blues."

Production

When Led Zeppelin recorded "Travelling Riverside Blues" at Maida Vale Studios, they were particularly pleased with the take, as Jimmy Page confirmed: "That one—there was a particularly good engineer. He was really good, as you can tell from those recordings. We did

1

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

Led Zeppelin knew this "Travelling Riverside Blues" to be an exceptional piece, as they went on to include it, in 1990, in the first boxed set; in 1993 on the remastered version of *Coda* included in *The Complete Studio Recordings*; in 1997 on *Led Zeppelin BBC Sessions* and in the 2016 updated version, *The Complete BBC Sessions*; in the 2008 *Definitive Collection* boxed set; and finally in 2015, on the first companion disc in the deluxe edition of *Coda*!

A promotional single of "Travelling Riverside Blues" was issued in 1990, and even made it to number 7 in the US on the Billboard Mainstream Rock chart. A music video of the song was shot in October of the same year, which features on the *Led Zeppelin DVD*, released on May 26, 2003.

actually have the chance to do some overdubs. I remember asking the BBC, when we did further stuff—'Where's that engineer?' 'Oh [they replied], he's been promoted.'"[128] The engineer in question was Tony Wilson, whom they still managed to team up with, three days later, for session five, at the Playhouse Theatre, on June 27, 1969.

"Travelling Riverside Blues" was a little gem in the discography of the Zeppelin four at the time, and owed its place to Jimmy Page's admiration for Robert Johnson. Interestingly, they had not initially been planning to record this piece: "What happened was we'd played two or three Zep things, and the producers wanted one more track," the guitarist explained. "So we recorded that cover, in one go, one single take. Just like that. One take. And we forgot all about that song until the bootleggers came out with it. And at that point the speculation started: was 'Travelling Riverside Blues' a forgotten track off the second album, and so on. It was quite touching, so we decided to include it on the boxed set [*Led Zeppelin Boxed Set*, 1990]."[129]

Musically, the Led Zeppelin version has little in common with Johnson's version. The song starts with Jimmy Page playing a slide introduction, more than likely on his Vox Phantom XII, his famous electric twelve-string that he used for "Thank You" and "Living Loving Maid (She's Just a Woman)" on *Led Zeppelin II*—both of which were recorded on June 25, 1969, at Morgan Studios in London, in other words the day after the band performed at Maida Vale Studios. As Page mentioned, the group had the opportunity to do overdubs on this song before it was broadcast on the BBC on June 29.

This introduction, played slide, appears to be one of those overdubs, which joins up with the original recording, probably at 0:12. Page's guitar is in concert G tuning (D G D G B D). He then executes an awesome riff, still on the bottleneck, which is not dissimilar to that of "I'm Yours and I'm Hers" by Johnny Winter, released in April 1969, on the eponymous second album of the albino bluesman. Page is then joined by John Bonham and John Paul Jones (from 0:16). The duo provides him with top-class support, the Ludwig "Natural Maple" and the Jazz Bass setting up a phenomenal groove—a blues-rock rhythm with a touch of funk. Robert Plant's entrance adds another layer of richness to the piece, as the Zeppelin singer delivers an incredible performance (from 0:32). Then, at 3:10, Jimmy Page has his chance to shine with a superb solo, recorded by overdub, this time on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One." He starts with some very bluesy phrases, before adding distortion to his guitar with his Tone Bender Professional MK II, and setting off on a very successful rock improvisation (from 3:23).

After resuming his vocal, Robert Plant ends the track with his incomparable voice, supported by further contributions by Page on his Les Paul (added by overdub) and the remarkable rhythm duo of Bonham and Jones.

It is a pity that "Travelling Riverside Blues" never made it onto the track listing for a studio album, particularly *Led Zeppelin II*, but this surprising and wonderful live version alone is worth its weight in gold.

The four musicians at Chateau Marmont, 8221 Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood. They returned to London more marked by the blues than ever, as witnessed by "Travelling Riverside Blues."

WHOLE LOTTA LOVE
(MEDLEY : BOOGIE CHILLUN / FIXIN' TO DIE / THAT'S ALRIGHT MAMA / A MESS OF BLUES)

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, John Lee Hooker, Bernard Besman, Bukka White, Arthur Crudup, Doc Pomus, Mort Shuman / 13:45

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, tambourine
Jimmy Page: electric guitar
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Paris Theatre, London: April 1, 1971
Technical Team
Producers: Jeff Griffin, Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: (?)

Genesis

This version of "Whole Lotta Love," which is in itself a mini masterpiece of heavy rock, counts among the most spectacular ever devised by Led Zeppelin, on account of its second part consisting of covers of several big blues standards. The homage begins with "Boogie Chillun," originally recorded as "Boogie Chillen'" in 1948 at United Sound Systems Recording Studios in Detroit, Michigan, for the Modern label, the song that established John Lee Hooker as the undisputed king of boogie. Then comes "Fixin' to Die," recorded by Bukka White (assisted by Washboard Sam) on May 8, 1940, for the label OKeh, under the supervision of Lester Melrose. A blues number in the great tradition—*I know I was born to die but I hate to leave my children cryin'*—which would go on to be covered by multiple artists, including Bob Dylan in 1961 (some ten years prior to Led Zeppelin).

The tribute continues with "That's Alright Mama," a 1946 blues number recorded as "That's All Right" by Arthur Crudup, which owes its worldwide fame, however, to the Elvis Presley version, recorded on July 5, 1954, in Sam Phillips's studios in Memphis, with Scotty Moore on the guitar and Bill Black on the double bass. Indeed this was the first single, with "Blue Moon of Kentucky" as its B-side, to be released by the King, as he would become known—the first of the rock 'n' roll era. "A Mess of Blues," the last cover included in the medley, is a composition by the Doc Pomus/Mort Shuman duo, recorded by Elvis Presley in 1960 as the B-side to "It's Now or Never."

The medley went out on the BBC airwaves on the *John Peel Sunday Concert* show on April 4, 1971.

Production

So this long medley lasting nearly fourteen minutes kicks off with "Whole Lotta Love." Jimmy Page attacks his immortal riff, which, curiously, sounds rather thin: the

siana Hayride

Elvis Presley at the Louisiana Hayride in 1954. *That's All Right Mama...*

texture is not the same as on the original recording, which had much more distortion on it. Page seems to have fed his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" through his wah-wah pedal to achieve this sound favoring the midrange frequencies, the pedal set to a middle position. He is probably using his Marshall 1959SLP for amplification, or perhaps a "Jimmy Page" Hiwatt Custom 100. John Paul Jones's Fender Jazz Bass very soon comes in to lend support. His strings have a dynamic feel and a metallic ring to them that is absolutely fabulous. Robert Plant is the third to make his entrance, his voice as powerful and high-pitched as ever. Then John Bonham joins in to complete the quartet, battering his Ludwig "Green Sparkle" with uncompromising force.

Jimmy Page and his theremin, which provided the crucial effect on the "freakout" section of "Whole Lotta Love."

The famous "freakout section" is rather muddled: Jones's bass sows confusion, probably deliberately (from 1:27), especially when combined with Page's effects, Plant's cries and tambourine, and Bonzo's drums. After striking a few power chords, the guitarist launches into a superb solo, close to the version on the album (at 3:25). He is followed by Plant on vocals, and the first part of "Whole Lotta Love" concludes on a final chord (at 4:08).

The Led Zeppelin frontman starts out on the next piece almost a cappella, accompanied only by Page's Les Paul, which answers him with short, blues-tinged phrases (from 4:17). He then takes up a new riff, and the whole band launches into John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Chillun" (at 4:58). The Englishmen's version is a complete reworking of the bluesman's song, with much more of a hard-rock flavor. Bonham pummels his Ludwig, the bass drum and the hi-hat beating time relentlessly. Robert Plant once again performs an excellent lead vocal, his voice taut and bluesy. Once the final verse is over, Jimmy Page delivers another, very inspired, solo on his Gibson, backed by an energetic walking bass line from John Paul Jones (from 5:46).

Next comes "Fixin' to Die" by Bukka White, once again a radical reworking of the original (from 6:30). The bass drum and bass guitar mark the sixteenth notes, while Page plays a simpler, less cluttered accompaniment, thereby allowing space for Plant's voice to unfold to full effect, with a very spirited performance in a high register.

Then comes the first of the two songs taken from Elvis Presley's repertoire (from 7:12). Firstly, the ultra-famous "That's All Right." The Zeppelin four respect the Elvis version, and Page even replicates Scotty Moore's rhythm part and solo (at 8:11). The band's performance is excellent, though Plant's tambourine is a little too prominent, and there is some confusion around the placing or choice of chords (listen at around 8:39).

It is Robert Plant who gets the second Elvis cover, "A Mess of Blues," under way (at around 9:08), with the words *I just got your letter baby*, which he sings into the microphone unaccompanied. His bandmates join him almost immediately with a gutsy accompaniment, Bonham's hi-hat practically on fire. The Englishmen's version is adrenaline packed and very nicely done, despite some wavering between Plant and the rest of the band in the harmonic changes. But the Led Zeppelin singer proves again that he is not daunted by Elvis, and the powerful cry he lets out (at 10:32) is superb. The song ends to the sound of applause (at 11:22).

But the band still needs to round off the medley with a repeat of "Whole Lotta Love," continuing into the second part of the song. And so the four musicians return to the landmark track from their second album (*Led Zeppelin II*), with Robert Plant singing a cappella at first (from 11:35), before the rest of the band comes in. This time, Page's Les Paul has a fuller feel to it, the sound aggressive and with ample distortion. Page then brings the number to a close with a fine solo, which he modulates around a new, very successful harmonic progression (at 12:59). The medley ends to the sound of the applause of the audience present at the Paris Cinema, London, on April 1, 1971.

WHITE SUMMER

Jimmy Page / 8:23

Musicians
Jimmy Page: electric guitar
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
Playhouse Theatre, London: June 27, 1969
Technical Team
Producers: Jeff Griffin, Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: Tony Wilson

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

After the Yardbirds, Keith Relf set up the acoustic duo, Together, with Jim McCarty, followed by the group Renaissance with his sister Jane Relf. The singer died on May 14, 1976, after electrocuting himself on his guitar, which was plugged into an amp that must have had a faulty connection.

Genesis

"White Summer" dates back to the time of the Yardbirds, though Jimmy Page had recorded it without the other members of the group, on April 28 and 29, 1967, at De Lane Lea Studios in London, accompanied only by Chris Karan on the tabla and an oboe player (unknown). This composition by Page also appears on the band's last album, *Little Games*, released in July 1967.

Probably influenced by the Irish ballad "She Moved Through the Fair" (covered, notably, by Fairport Convention in 1969 and Mike Oldfield in 1996), "White Summer" testifies to the guitarist's interest in both the folk tradition and the music of the East. Once Led Zeppelin was established, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham played it live onstage from early on, particularly on their first American tour, between December 1968 and February 1969. The recording for the BBC, dubbed *One Night Stand*, took place on their summer tour of the United Kingdom, on June 27, 1969, at the Playhouse Theatre in London. It was to be the pilot for Radio One's *In Concert* series, and was transmitted on August 10 on John Peel's *Top Gear* show. It can also be found coupled with "Black Mountain Side" in the first *Led Zeppelin Boxed Set* (1990), *The Complete Studio Recordings* (1993), *Led Zeppelin Definitive Collection* (2008), and on the companion disc to *Led Zeppelin* (2014). "White Summer" had a second lease on life when it was loosely recycled for the introduction of "Over the Hills and Far Away" (on *Houses of the Holy*).

Production

Musically powerful, "White Summer" is all about the guitar and the sound: that of the 1961 Danelectro DC 59, the 3021 model, an instrument purchased by Jimmy Page in the sixties. To play this piece, the guitarist uses a tuning familiar to folk musicians: D A D G A D.

When writing this instrumental, Jimmy Page was greatly inspired by the arrangements of the guitarist

JARZEMBOWSKI
FUNERAL HOME
Coca-Cola

The Yardbirds in 1967. Right to left: Jim McCarty, Chris Dreja, Keith Relf, and Jimmy Page. "White Summer," a composition by the guitarist, appears on the band's last album, Little Games, released that same year.

Jimmy Page performs "White Summer" on his Danelectro 3021, tuned in D A D G A D, in June 1969 at the Bath Festival of Blues.

Davy Graham, who, in 1963, recorded a version of the traditional Irish tune "She Moved Thro' the Fair," on the EP *The Thamesiders & Davy Graham: From a London Hootenanny*. Page claims not to have been consciously influenced by it, suggesting it had exerted more of a subconscious effect on him. Which is possible. Whatever the case may be, after immortalizing the piece with the Yardbirds in 1967 on the album *Little Games*, Page decided to resurrect it for Led Zeppelin. It was never included in any of the band's studio albums, but it was part of their live set for several years. And each time "White Summer" was performed in public, Page played it quite differently, with fairly obvious variations.

In the version recorded on June 27, 1969, at the Playhouse Theatre, London, the piece opens with the sound of John Bonham's resounding gong. The guitarist plays a few harmonic notes before launching into the melody of this "White Summer" with its very apparent Eastern influences. He performs some very strong bends and uses heavy vibrato, presumably in an attempt to mimic the sound qualities of an Indian sitar.

This long improvisation lasting over eight minutes comprises a number of different sections.

The first consists of the presentation of the main theme, in a performance with a strong Eastern color, featuring bends, vibrato, and harmonics. The phrasing is excellent.

The second part continues the same theme, but here it is more rhythmic, performed in a country style, with typical Page-style fingerpicking, in other words a combination of plectrum and fingers (from 1:13).

The third is similar to the one before, except that John Bonham comes in on the drums, using principally his hi-hat and beaters, with which he plays a rhythm pattern on his various tom-toms. John Paul Jones is in on the action too, his bass playing fairly discreet but still distinctly audible (from 1:38).

For the fourth part, Jimmy Page is alone on his Danelectro again. He elaborates on an Arabian-style melody before taking off on an improvisation that rather defies definition, with its Indian and country influences, and is not, perhaps, altogether successful (from 2:13).

In the fifth part he takes up the melody of "Black Mountain Side," the instrumental written for Led Zeppelin's first opus, which, in concert, he virtually always played coupled with "White Summer" (from 3:53).

The sequence that follows is another improvisation, with alternating quiet and energetic passages and that overriding Eastern flavor. The execution is not always very tidy (from 5:00).

The seventh section is introduced by very soft, faintly dissonant chords (from 6:09).

Then comes a return to the main country theme, Bonham providing the rhythmic backing with his hi-hat and beaters. This eighth sequence gradually quiets down, as Bonzo performs rolls on his tom-toms and the gong resounds again (from 6:25).

Lastly, the ninth part consists of a return to the opening theme, with bends, vibrato, and harmonics. The piece ends on a chord backed with a flourish of Bonham's crash cymbal, bass drum, and snare drum (from 7:20).

SUNSHINE WOMAN

Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham, Willie Dixon, Robert Johnson / 3:06

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals, harmonica
Jimmy Page: electric guitar
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Unidentified Musician: piano
Recorded
Maida Vale, Studio Four, London: March 19, 1969
Technical Team
Producers: Jeff Griffin, Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: Joe Young

Genesis

In 2016, Jimmy Page revealed to *Mojo* magazine (quoted in the *Guardian*) that "Sunshine Woman" had been "basically made up on the spot" during Alexis Korner's BBC World Service *Rhythm and Blues* show in March 1969, adding: "We played it as if we were in rehearsals, starting it around the riff and then working it out."[130] The recording was captured on March 19, 1969, then broadcast on April 14. Here, again, the names of Willie Dixon and Robert Johnson have been added to the credits, for the same reason as on "The Girl I Love She Got Long Black Wavy Hair," namely that elements were borrowed from, in this case, "Let Me Love You Baby" and "Traveling Riverside Blues." The lyrics are bathed in gentle optimism. The narrator is telling anyone willing to listen that his girl *treats [him] fine*; she makes him breakfast, *she got no diamond*, but she *shine like gold*. And *when she walks…[she] shakes just like a willow tree…*

Production

It is not that surprising, given their sheer musicianship, that Led Zeppelin would quite spontaneously compose this kind of frenetic blues rocker. "Sunshine Woman" is a blues progression like a thousand others. But it is the standard of the performance that sets the band apart.

The recording is of poor quality, but it has historic value, as it is the only version remaining. The tapes of the performance on March 19, 1969, have apparently been lost forever. Jimmy Page, who had worked on the first version of *BBC Sessions* in 1997, had a surprise one day: "After that [the BBC Sessions], 'Sunshine Woman' starts to appear on the bootleg scene. From what I'm led to believe, it was recorded off the radio by someone in Eastern Europe. It managed to travel around, and we got a good source of that show."[128] The track opens with a piano. But who is it on the keyboard? The playing is not

Alexis Korner at a recording session in the early seventies. It was on the *BBC World Service Rhythm and Blues* program presented by this founding father of British blues that "Sunshine Woman" had its first airing.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

In 1970, Alexis Korner set up the band Collective Consciousness Society (CCS) and recorded an eponymous album produced by Mickie Most. It features an instrumental version of "Whole Lotta Love," which was even released as a single in September 1970.

really in the style of John Paul Jones, who, in any case, is recognizable on the bass. Since this is a live performance, it must be an unknown musician on the keyboard, unless some overdubs were added subsequently, as was done on "Travelling Riverside Blues." If there were no overdubs, there must have been a pianist present on March 19, when Led Zeppelin recorded their performance for Alexis Korner's *Rhythm and Blues* program (later rechristened *Blues Is Where You Hear It*), along with a number of other musicians.

So, after these few opening notes played on the piano, the whole band launches into "Sunshine Woman" with fierce energy. Robert Plant is on the harmonica, which immediately sets the tone of this high-octane blues-rock number. He is supported by John Bonham, who lays down a fabulous groove with his Ludwig "Natural Maple," striking the snare drum, drumskins, and cymbals with that power that is always so impressive. Jimmy Page reinforces the piano harmony with a distorted riff, which he probably plays on his famous "Dragon" Telecaster—he did not acquire his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" until the second half of April. John Paul Jones accompanies him on his Fender Jazz Bass, with a solid bass line that is very Tamla Motown.

Robert Plant performs an excellent vocal, his voice as impressive as always, his words imbued with feeling through and through. He sings from the heart, with rhythm 'n' soul touches. After two verses, he embarks on a short harmonica blues solo, amused, perhaps, to be recording for the Alexis Korner show, as he had actually played with Alexis Korner shortly before joining Led Zeppelin in 1968 (from 1:09).

He then hands it over to the infamous unidentified pianist, who performs a very good keyboard solo (from 1:39). Plant then resumes the lead vocal for a final verse, and it is Jimmy Page who concludes the piece, with a third solo! His guitar work is absolutely brilliant and utterly inspired, and his fingers literally fly over the neck of his Fender (from 2:36). He winds up this excellent version of "Sunshine Woman" with a superb, very spirited phrase, which is enriched by Robert Plant's harmonica. It is a great shame that this song was never recorded in the studio, or at the very least that there is not a better live recording available.

ROYAL ALBERT HALL, JANUARY 9, 1970 : 1. WE'RE GONNA GROOVE 2. I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY 3. DAZED AND CONFUSED 4. WHITE SUMMER 5. WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE 6. HOW MANY MORE TIMES 7. MOBY DICK 8. WHOLE LOTTA LOVE 9. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN 10. C'MON EVERYBODY (COCHRAN) 10. SOMETHIN' ELSE 11. BRING IT ON HOME **DANMARKS RADIO (GLADSAXE TEEN CLUB, GLADSAXE), MARCH 15, 1969 :** 1. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN 2. DAZED AND CONFUSED 3. BABE I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU 4. HOW MANY MORE TIMES **SUPERSHOW (STAINES STUDIO, LONDON), MARCH 25, 1969 :** DAZED AND CONFUSED **TOUS EN SCÈNE (OLYMPIA, PARIS), OCTOBER 10, 1969 :** 1. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN 2. DAZED AND CONFUSED **SYDNEY SHOWGROUND, FEBRUARY 27, 1972 :** IMMIGRANT SONG **MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, JULY 27–29, 1973 :** 1. BLACK DOG 2. MISTY MOUNTAIN HOP 3. SINCE I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU 4. THE OCEAN **EARLS COURT, MAY 24–25, 1975 :** 1. GOING TO CALIFORNIA 2. THAT'S THE WAY 3. BRON-Y-AUR STOMP 4. IN MY TIME OF DYING 5. TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT 6. STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN **KNEBWORTH, AUGUST 4, 1979 :** 1. ROCK AND ROLL 2. NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE 3. SICK AGAIN 4. ACHILLES LAST STAND 5. IN THE EVENING 6. KASHMIR 7. WHOLE LOTTA LOVE 8. YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE **NEW YORK NBC STUDIO, SEPTEMBER 19, 1970 :** PRESS CONFERENCE **SYDNEY SHOWGROUND, FEBRUARY 27, 1972 :** ROCK AND ROLL **ABC GET TO KNOW, FEBRUARY 27, 1972 :** INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT PLANT AND JOHN BONHAM **BBC2 THE OLD GREY WHISTLE TEST, JANUARY 12, 1975 :** INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT PLANT AT VORST NATIONAAL, BRUSSELS **REMASTERS PROMOTION I, OCTOBER 1990 :** OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY **REMASTERS PROMOTION II, OCTOBER 1990 :** TRAVELLING RIVERSIDE BLUES

DVD 2003

LED ZEPPELIN DVD

DVD LED ZEPPELIN DVD

RELEASE DATE

United Kingdom: June 5, 2003

Label: Atlantic / RECORD NUMBER: Atlantic 0349 70198-2

United States: May 27, 2003

Number 3 (United Kingdom)

*All DVD songs have been reviewed in previous chapters except "C'mon Everybody."

Robert Plant and Jimmy Page (in the foreground), on stage at Madison Square Garden, during the filming of *The Song Remains the Same*.

LED ZEPPELIN IN VISION

In the early 2000s, Jimmy Page started trawling through the Led Zeppelin video archives in response to demand from the fans. The producer Kevin Shirley, whom Page met during his collaboration with the Black Crowes, and the filmmaker Dick Carruthers assisted him with his project.

This double DVD spans the whole Led Zeppelin period, from 1969 to 1979. It includes several concerts that went down in history: the Royal Albert Hall on January 9, 1970; Madison Square Garden on July 27, 28, and 29, 1973; Earls Court on May 24 and 25, 1975; and the Knebworth Festival on August 4, 1979. Much of the other material is equally exciting, for example the live performance of "Communication Breakdown" and of "Dazed and Confused" at Olympia on October 10, 1969 (for the program *Tous en scène*).

The *Led Zeppelin DVD*, whose cover features a photo of the West and East Mitten Buttes in Monument Valley (Arizona), was released in the United Kingdom on June 5, 2003 (May 27, 2003 in the United States), where it reached number 3 on the sales charts. It made number 1 in the United States, Australia, Japan, Norway, and Sweden, and number 2 in the Netherlands. In France, it sold sixty thousand copies, and was certified triple Platinum.

C'MON EVERYBODY

Eddie Cochran, Jerry Capehart / 2:28

Musicians
Robert Plant: vocals
Jimmy Page: electric guitar
John Paul Jones: bass
John Bonham: drums
Recorded
London: Royal Albert Hall, January 9, 1970
Technical Team
Producer: Jimmy Page
Sound Engineer: Vic Maile

Eddie Cochran and his legendary Gretsch G6120. His "C'mon Everybody" was number 6 in the UK charts in March 1959.

Genesis

"C'mon Everybody" is the second song that Led Zeppelin borrowed from Eddie Cochran's repertoire. The original recording dates from October 1958. Cochran, on vocals and guitar, is accompanied by Ray Johnson (piano), Connie Smith (bass), and Earl Palmer (drums). The single, which came with "Don't Ever Let Me Go" as its B-side, was released in the same month, October 1958, and reached number 35 on the Billboard charts in January of the following year. This composition by Eddie Cochran and Jerry Capehart proved more successful in the United Kingdom, though, peaking at number 6 on March 13, 1959. *Well c'mon everybody/And let's get together tonight/I got some money in my jeans/And I'm really gonna spend it right/Been a-doin' my homework all week long/Now the house is empty the folks are gone*...The song revels in the insouciance of youth and the rock 'n' roll good times.

"C'mon Everybody," which was picked as one of *Rolling Stone*'s "500 Greatest Songs of All Time" (albeit in 411th place), has been covered by various artists, including Humble Pie, the Sex Pistols, and Bryan Adams. The version by Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham that features on the *Led Zeppelin DVD* was recorded at the legendary concert they played at the Royal Albert Hall, London, on January 9, 1970.

Production

The Led Zeppelin version is an excellent reworking of the piece, and more dynamic and energetic than the original. It opens with a hard, distorted riff played by Jimmy Page, not on his Gibson Les Paul "Number One" but on his famous Gibson "Black Beauty." John Paul Jones backs him up with a very spirited bass line, played with his fingers on his Fender Jazz Bass. John Bonham, meanwhile, accompanies his bandmates on his Ludwig "Natural Maple," laying down a groove with thundering blows, in an eternal quest for the killer swing.

FOR LED ZEP ADDICTS

At the concert at the Royal Albert Hall on January 9, 1970, Jimmy Page played "C'mon Everybody" on his Gibson "Black Beauty," which was stolen a few months later (see pages 166 and 167). Incidentally, there is a photo of the guitarist with that instrument on the cover of the CD *Hip Young Guitar Slinger*, a compilation released in September 2000.

For "C'mon Everybody," the foursome delivered a more energetic reworking of the Eddie Cochran classic.

In the first verse, Robert Plant does not force his voice, and stays in a fairly low register. It is only on the refrain that he gives it free rein, adopting a rock timbre and reaching for the high notes. At the end of the second verse, Jimmy Page launches into the inevitable solo on his "Black Beauty." His playing is good rather than sensational, but his performance is infused with the spirit of rock, and he manages to lend the piece more of a hard-rock edge (from 1:18). Then, after a final verse, the band brings this upbeat number to a clean finish.

This Led Zeppelin version is a quality adaptation. The Eddie Cochran classic has been covered countless times since it was written, but the version by the four Englishmen is very much in keeping with that of the American. What's more, it has almost a punk feel to it, well ahead of its time!

This show on January 9, 1970, was recorded on eight tracks by Vic Maile using the Pye Mobile Studio, which did a very good job of capturing it.

GLOSSARY

bend: A guitar technique in which the guitarist pulls on a string with a finger of his or her fretting hand in order to raise a note by a semitone or more.

bottleneck: A tube of glass (or metal) that guitarists place on one finger and slide along the strings to produce a metallic sound. This style of playing originated with the pioneers of the blues, who used the neck of a real bottle. The bottleneck is generally combined with *open tuning*, that is when the instrument's six open strings form a chord (G or D, for example).

break: An instrumental interlude that interrupts the development of a song. A hiatus, in other words, that eventually reintroduces the main musical material.

bridge: A musical passage connecting two parts of a song. The bridge generally links the verse to the refrain.

British blues boom: A movement that developed in England in the mid-1960s, led by the Rolling Stones and other British rock groups (for example the Yardbirds) who were strongly influenced by their African American elders, such as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

Chicago blues: There are several different types of Chicago blues. Electric Chicago blues, an amplified version of Delta blues, is embodied mainly by the artists of Chess Records, from Willie Dixon to Howlin' Wolf via Muddy Waters and Sonny Boy Williamson II.

coda: This Italian term denotes an additional section, of varying length, that concludes a song or track.

compressor: An electronic circuit that serves to amplify low-volume sounds or, conversely, to reduce high-volume sounds during recording or mixing.

cover: A recording or performance of a preexisting song or track, usually in an arrangement that differs from the original version.

cowbell: A percussion instrument used in rock and rhythm 'n' blues as well as in classical (Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss) and avant-garde (Karlheinz Stockhausen, Olivier Messiaen) music in the European tradition.

delay: An electronically obtained effect that retards a sound signal by feeding it back into the initial signal with the desired number of repeats. Similar to the echo.

distortion: *See* fuzz.

dive bomb: A guitar technique in which the whammy bar of an instrument is used to rapidly lower the pitch of one or more notes in order to create an effect that sounds like a falling bomb.

drone: A sustained note in a low register.

effects pedal: A small electronic device that subjects the sound of an instrument to a specific effect. Generally operated by foot, as in the case of the fuzz box, the range of available effects includes **wah-wah**, **distortion**, **delay**, and **flanging**.

fade-in: The process of gradually increasing the sound (generally at the beginning of a song).

fade-out: The process of gradually reducing the sound (generally at the end of a song).

feedback: *See* Larsen.

fill: A rhythmic figure played on the drums in order to launch a number or mark a transition.

finger-picking: A guitar technique, used mainly in folk music and the blues, in which the fingers of the right hand (in the case of a right-handed musician) pluck the strings of a chord independently of one another (the opposite of strumming). This generally allows the performer to emphasize the bass line and melody of a song.

flanging: A sound effect obtained by supplementing the original signal with the same signal delayed by a few milliseconds.

fretless (bass): A (generally electric) bass guitar whose frets have been removed in order to approximate the sound of an upright bass. Rick Danko of the Band was a master of the fretless bass.

fuzz: A distorted sound effect obtained by saturating the sound signal, generally by means of a foot pedal known as a fuzz box. The Rolling Stones pioneered the fuzz box in "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." The effect is used mainly on guitars.

groove: The moment when the musicians, in total communion with one another, imbue a song or track with its own special atmosphere, an alchemical process that takes in both rhythm and harmony and is felt by all the musicians as one.

hook: A succession of notes designed to grab the listener's attention. This technique was developed by jazz musicians before it moved across into rock music.

jam: A generally informal and improvised gathering of musicians motivated as a rule by the mere pleasure of playing together.

Larsen: A physical phenomenon that occurs when an amplified output (the speakers of an amp, for example) is located too close to an input device (especially the pickup of an electric guitar or a singer's mic). This results in a hissing noise or a strong buzz. Since the sixties, this feedback effect has been much used by rock guitarists. The best example can be heard in the guitar intro to the Beatles' "I Feel Fine," which is often cited as the very first Larsen effect recorded on disc.

lead: A term denoting the principal voice or instrument on a song or track (lead vocal or lead guitar, for example).

Leslie speaker: A cabinet housing a rotating loudspeaker, originally intended for use with the Hammond organ. The swirling acoustic effect can be modulated as required.

lick: A short musical phrase within a well-defined musical style (blues, rock, country, jazz, etc.), played to complement or accompany the arrangement and/or melodic line of a song.

low-down: In music, this term is used to describe a rural, authentic form of blues unadulterated by any outside influence.

mute: A system for turning off the sound on a mixing desk channel strip. Alternatively, the term is used to denote the process of deadening a string on a guitar.

open tuning: An alternative method of tuning the guitar in order to obtain in general (when the strings are unstopped) a six-note chord. This technique (for example open G, D, and A tunings) is commonly used in the blues.

outtake: A song or track, recorded either in the studio or live, that has not been included on an official album. It can be either a previously unreleased track or an alternative version of an existing track.

overdubbing/overdub: A procedure by means of which additional sounds (for example, a guitar part or a second voice) are added to a recording.

palm mute: A guitar technique that involves stopping the strings with the side of the right hand (in the case of right-handed guitarists), while simultaneously playing the notes with a pick.

pattern: A sequence that recurs throughout a track and can be repeated indefinitely to form a loop.

phasing: An electronic effect that subjects the audio signal to various filters and oscillators, allowing a richer and more colorful sound to be obtained, especially on distorted guitars.

playback: The partially or fully formed instrumental part of a song that provides the singer or instrumentalist with an adequate musical basis over which to record his or her own performance.

power chord: This type of guitar chord is made up of two notes, the tonic and the fifth. Used to great effect in rock music, the power chord is often combined with distortion.

premix: A stage in the recording process at which the various tracks recorded on a multitrack tape machine are mixed in order to provide a sense of the progress made so far. Sometimes called a rough mix.

reverb: An effect created in the studio, either electronically or using a natural echo chamber, whose purpose is to provide certain sounds (in particular the voice or a solo instrument) with a sense of space and acoustic relief during the recording or mixing process.

riff: An abbreviation of *rhythmic figure*, a riff is a short phrase, consisting of a succession of notes or chords, that recurs regularly throughout a song or track.

rimshot: A drumming technique that involves striking the rim and head of a snare drum (or tom) at the same time. This produces an accented, attacking sound.

roots: This term, used as both a noun and an adjective, denotes a return to the origins of popular music, such as blues and Appalachian music.

score: A notated musical arrangement.

shuffle: A musical style that originated in Jamaica in the fifties, a kind of rhythm 'n' blues that can be seen as a forerunner of ska.

slap-back echo: An echo typically employed by the pioneers of rock 'n' roll, such as Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent, and Buddy Holly.

strumming: A guitar technique that involves brushing the right hand (in the case of right-handed guitarists) across the strings, with or without a pick. This is one of the most widespread techniques employed on the instrument.

sustain: The ability of an instrument to maintain a note over time. This is a property not least of electric guitars, on which it is frequently extended by various artificial means, such as distortion, sustainer pedals, and the like.

track listing: The list of songs on an album.

wah-wah: The wah-wah pedal, one of the first electronic effects designed for electric guitarists, was popularized as early as 1967 by masters of the instrument such as Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix. The musician alters the frequency of a note by operating the articulated part of the device with the foot, thereby obtaining a highly distinctive sonic effect worthy of the name. The wah-wah went on to be much used in funk as well as rock, and has also been adapted for use with other instruments such as electronic keyboards.

walking bass: A style of accompaniment (on bass guitar or with the left hand on the piano) in which a single note is played on each beat of the bar. Boogie-woogie pianists made this style of playing their own in the honky-tonks of the southern United States during the early years of the twentieth century.

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Jimmy Page and his Gibson Les Paul "Number One," a legendary guitar in the hands of an extraordinary musician.

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Original title: *Led Zeppelin, La Totale*
Texts: Jean-Michel Guesdon and Philippe Margotin
Published by Éditions E/P/A—Hachette Livre, 2018

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Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers
Hachette Book Group
1290 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10104

www.hachettebookgroup.com
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First English-language Edition: October 2018

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LCCN: 2018942472
ISBNs: 978-0-316-44867-3 (hardcover), 978-0-316-41803-4 (ebook)

Printed in China

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

JEAN-MICHEL GUESDON is a musician, composer, and sound engineer, which gives him a unique perspective on the Led Zeppelin recordings.

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Together they wrote *All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Beatles Release, Bob Dylan All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Track, Rolling Stones All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Track*, and *Pink Floyd All the Songs: The Story Behind Every Track*. They live in France.

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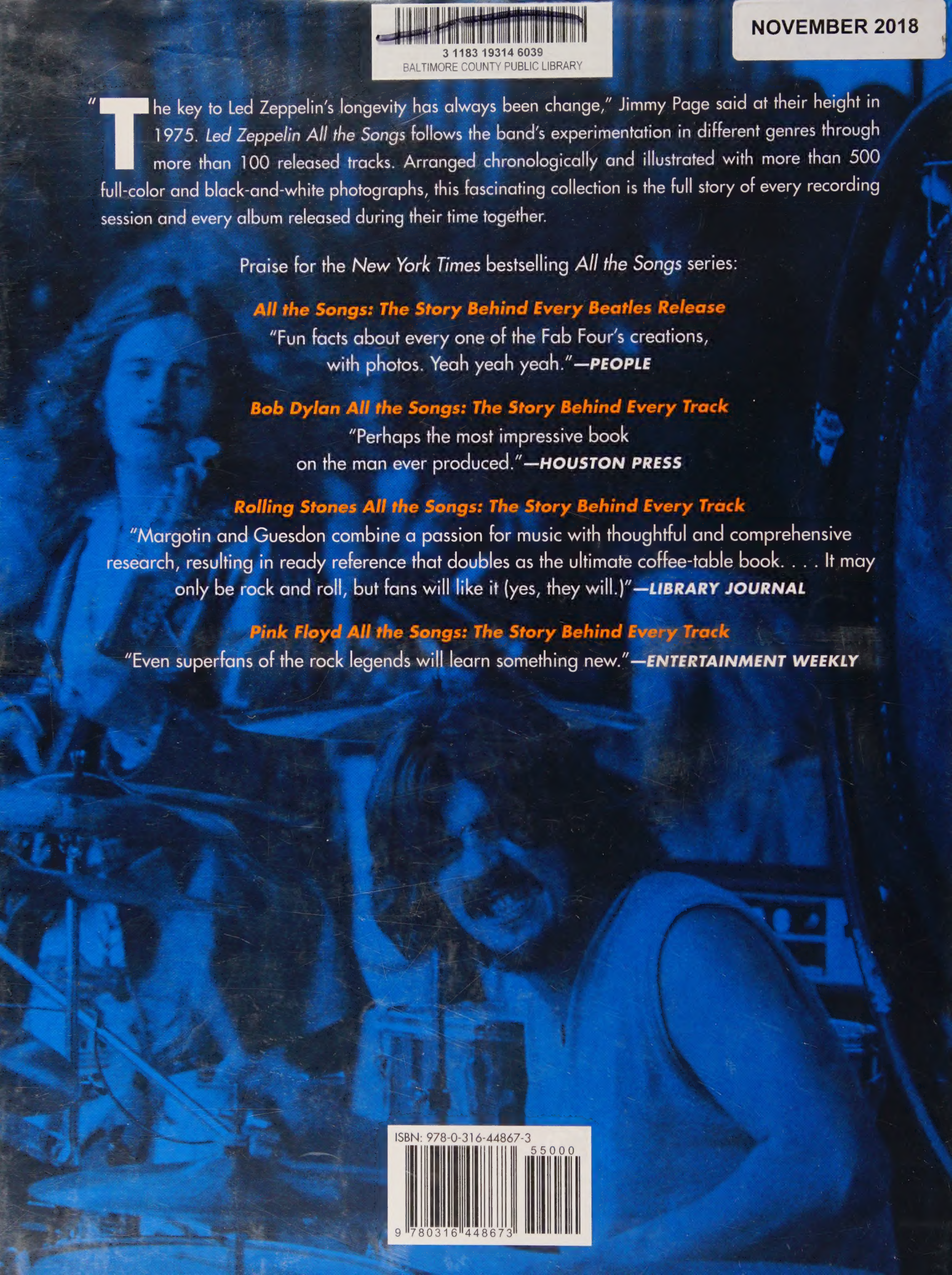

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